United Nations S/PV.4356

Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

Provisional

4356th meeting

Monday, 13 August 2001, 5.55 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Valdivieso	(Colombia)
Members:	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Jamaica	Mr. Ward
	Mali	Mr. Touré
	Mauritius	Mr. Latona
	Norway	Mr. Strømmen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Singapore	Mr. Chong
	Tunisia	Mr. Cherif
	Ukraine	Mr. Kulyk
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Rosenblatt

Agenda

The situation in The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting was called to order at 5.55 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

> "The Security Council welcomes the signing of the Framework Agreement in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia by President Trajkovski and the leaders of four political parties on 13 August 2001. The Council calls for the full and immediate implementation of the Agreement, which promotes the peaceful and harmonious development of civil society while respecting the ethnic identity and the interests of all Macedonian citizens.
>
> "The Council calls for the full implementation of its resolution 1345 (2001) and reaffirms the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
>
> "The Council calls again on all those concerned, including on leaders of ethnic Albanian communities in the region, publicly to condemn violence and ethnic intolerance and to use their influence to secure peace. It reiterates its call to all who have contact with extremist groups to make clear to them that they have no support from any quarter in the international community. The Council condemns the ongoing violence by extremists and calls on all parties to respect the ceasefire. The Council rejects any attempt to use violence, including the use of landmines, to undermine the Framework Agreement, which has been negotiated by the democratically elected political leadership of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
>
> "The Security Council supports the actions of the President and Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia aimed at resolving the crisis and assuring a stable and democratic future for all of the citizens of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, including through continued dialogue with the full representation of all legitimate political parties to strengthen democracy and preserve the multi-ethnic character of Macedonian society and the stability of the country.
>
> "The Security Council welcomes the efforts of the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in support of the Framework Agreement. It also calls on the international community to consider how best to assist the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in facilitating its full implementation.
>
> "The Security Council will continue to follow closely developments on the ground."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2001/20.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4357

Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

Provisional

4357th meeting

Monday, 20 August 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Valdivieso	(Colombia)
Members:	Bangladesh	Mr. Ahsan
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Jamaica	Mr. Ward
	Mali	Mr. Maiga
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Norway	Mr. Strømmen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Singapore	Ms. Lee
	Tunisia	Mr. Jerandi
	Ukraine	Mr. Kulyk
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Letter dated 15 August 2001 from the Representatives of Mali and Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2001/797)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

01-51497 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Letter dated 15 August 2001 from the Representatives of Mali and Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2001/797)

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Algeria, Bahrain, Belgium, Djibouti, Egypt, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sudan, Turkey and Yemen, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Lancry (Israel) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Baali (Algeria), Mr. Buallay (Bahrain), Mr. de Ruyt (Belgium), Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti), Mr. Bebars (Egypt), Mr. Sharma (India), Mr. Widodo (Indonesia), Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Aldouri (Iraq), Mr. Akasaka (Japan), Mr. Goussous (Jordan), Mr. Al-Otaibi (Kuwait), Mr. Babaa (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia), Mr. Ly (Mauritania), Mr. Loulichki (Morocco), Mr. Al-Hassan (Oman), Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan), Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar), Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia), Mr. Maitland (South Africa), Mr. Erwa (Sudan), Mr. Cengizer (Turkey) and Mr. Al-Ashtal (Yemen) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 17 August 2001 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, which was issued as document S/2001/799, and which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the meeting of the Security Council to be held on Monday, 20 August 2001, regarding the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to participate in the current debate in accordance with the rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) took a seat at the Council table.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 17 August 2001 from the Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which reads as follows:

> "In my capacity as Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I have the honour to request that I be invited to participate in the debate on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council."

On previous occasions, the Security Council has extended invitations to representatives of other United Nations bodies in connection with the consideration of matters on its agenda. In accordance with past practice in this matter, I propose that the Council extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to the Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 17 August 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Mali to the United Nations which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that the Security Council extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Ahmad Hajihosseini, Deputy Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations, during the Council's discussion of the item entitled 'The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question'."

This letter will be published as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2001/800.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 to Mr. Ahmad Hajihosseini.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now resume its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in response to the request contained in a letter dated 15 August 2001 from the representatives of Mali and Qatar to the United Nations, document S/2001/797.

I should like to draw the attention of the members to the following documents: S/2001/754, S/2001/783, S/2001/785 and S/2001/798, respectively letters dated 31 July and 13, 14 and 16 August 2001 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations; also documents S/2001/768, S/2001/770, S/2001/775, S/2001/780 and S/2001/787, respectively letters dated 6, 7, 8, 9 and 13 August 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations; and documents S/2001/790 and S/2001/791, letters dated 8 and 10 August 2001 respectively, from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations.

The first speaker inscribed on my list is the Permanent Observer of Palestine, on whom I call.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. President. We also wish to express our happiness at seeing you preside over the Council during this month, and we wish you every success. I also wish to thank the Permanent Representative of China for his successful presidency in the previous month.

The Security Council is meeting today, five months after the vote on 27 March 2001 on the draft resolution submitted by the members of the Non-aligned Movement in the Council on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. The draft resolution was not adopted due to the exercise of the veto by a permanent member of the Council. Since then, the situation has deteriorated dangerously into the current situation, of which members are all aware.

We sincerely believe that matters might have been different if the Council had been able to take specific measures, and that we would therefore be in a different situation today. In any case, it is difficult to believe, and impossible to justify, the fact that the Security Council has not succeeded in taking any measures since the adoption of resolution 1322 (2000) of 7 October 2000 on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem. This is in spite of the several attempts that have taken place in this regard and in spite of the support of many members of the Council for those efforts.

This has taken place at a time when the Council is enthusiastically engaged in considering such issues as the prevention of armed conflict and the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Frankly, it seems to me that there is something fundamentally wrong that is affecting this international mechanism that was agreed upon in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations — an impact that also touches on the mechanism's credibility and effectiveness. We call upon the members of the Council to consider this issue as a matter of principle and to adhere to the Council's role in the maintenance of international peace and security at all times and in all places.

We come back once again to the Council today because of our full adherence to the principle of the Council's responsibility — including, of course, its responsibility for the question of Palestine — and because of our rejection of any attempt to neutralize the Council in that regard. Irrespective of how it is formulated, such an attempt can only mean an effort to evade international law and legitimacy and to deal with matters in accordance with the de facto balance of power. The urgent reason why we have returned to the Council is, of course, the continuing deterioration of the situation to a very dangerous level and the fact that there is no other mechanism or organized sustained effort to halt that deterioration and change the situation. We even believe that the recent period has led to an undermining of the only available plan, which is embodied in the recommendations of the Sharm el-Sheikh fact-finding committee known as the Mitchell Committee. Accordingly, we did not have many options. We hope that the Council will this time be able to fulfil its duties and adopt the necessary resolution to provide the positive impetus we all need.

The unprecedented and bloody military campaign waged by Israel against our people began after Ariel Sharon's infamous visit to Al-Haram Al-Sharif, on 28 September 2000. That visit precipitated the collective rejection by our people of an act of aggression against our sacred sites. It was also a rejection by Palestinians of Israel's continuing occupation and practices, and it ignited the second intifada. Since then, Israeli occupying forces have killed 563 Palestinians, a figure that increased to 572 over the course of the weekend. Just yesterday, by shelling a house in Rafah, the occupation forces murdered Samir Abu Zaid, his seven-year old son Salman and his three-year old daughter Alaa. Also yesterday, those forces murdered Ahmed Abu Arar, who was 14 years of age. They also killed another man in Nablus and injured one other while he tried to circumvent an Israeli checkpoint as he travelled back to his village near Nablus after purchasing school supplies for his children in that city. Checkpoints are intended to block the passage of an entire people. When someone tries to bypass those checkpoints he is murdered by the Israeli occupying forces. Is there anything more heinous than that?

During this period, therefore, the Israeli occupying forces have killed 572 Palestinians, many of them children. That figure is in addition to the Palestinians who have been martyred through other means, but nonetheless as a result of the occupation. In addition, around 20,000 Palestinians have been injured —many of them have been left permanently disabled.

The Israeli occupying forces have also caused extensive destruction to the economy and have razed vast agricultural areas and uprooted thousands of trees. In many instances they have also used heavy weapons — including tanks, helicopter gunships and even F-16 jets — to shell and destroy civilian houses and many sites belonging to the Palestinian Authority and other Palestinian institutions. They have also imposed internal and external blockades, which has led to the complete dismemberment of Palestinian territory and to a severe limitation of the movement of persons and goods between Palestinian territory and the outside world.

The occupying forces have also committed extrajudicial killings and assassinations against targeted persons by several means, including helicopter missiles and special covert units. On several occasions they have also invaded areas under the control of the Palestinian Authority, and Israeli tanks have recently entered and temporarily occupied an entire Palestinian city.

In addition to all that there are the atrocities committed by gangs of illegal Israeli settlers against our people under the cover and protection of the occupying forces. The Israeli occupying forces have thus committed many atrocities against our people, some of which are without doubt war crimes under the clear definition set out in the Fourth Geneva Convention and its First Additional Protocol, as well as the Statute of the International Criminal Court.

In general, the result of Israel's bloody military campaign and other measures, such as the withholding of Palestinian funds, has been the transformation of the lives of an entire people into a veritable hell and placing them, in essence, into a number of collective prisons. This is in addition to direct oppression, economic devastation and every sort of suffering to which the Palestinian people have been subjected. We have documented all of Israel's actions in 63 letters addressed to the President of the Security Council, the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly — letters that constitute the dossier of Israel's crimes. We have done so in order to keep the Council and the representatives of the international community aware of the details of what has been taken place. All of this has not been enough for Israel.

Recently, Israel has taken yet another illegal step by raiding and closing down Orient House, which is the Palestinian political centre in occupied East Jerusalem. That closure is in addition to the closure of nine other buildings belonging to other Palestinian institutions. This step constitutes a dangerous escalation and an assault on Palestinian national dignity and rights in the Holy City. Furthermore, it also marks a reversal by force of an important part of the agreements reached between the two sides and is a flagrant violation of the explicit commitment made in a letter dated 11 October 1993 from the Foreign Minister of Israel to the Foreign Minister of Norway regarding Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem. In that connection, we would like to recall that international consensus and relevant Security Council resolutions affirm that all actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, aimed at changing the legal status and demographic composition of Jerusalem are illegal, null and void.

After all this, Israel, the occupying Power, talks about Palestinian violence and denounces Palestinian acts of resistance. The origin of the whole conflict is the existence of the Israeli occupation and the practices of this occupation for 34 years, especially settler colonialism manifested in the confiscation of land and the illegal transfer of Israelis to the occupied territory and building settlements for them.

Another factor arises, which is the ongoing existence of occupation and its practices even after the start of the peace process and more than seven years after the signing of the Oslo agreement. Any attempt to ignore or circumvent this, in addition to being immoral, will only lead to failure in finding the necessary solutions to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the Middle East crisis.

As for the current dangerous deterioration, it is basically an outcome of Israeli actions and measures, particularly the military ones to which I have referred. Tension and confrontation are not caused because the Palestinian side attempts to invade Israel and not because the Palestinian Authority tries, for example, to expand its control and regain Palestinian territory. Tension and confrontation are there because Israeli occupying forces have expanded over Palestinian populated areas, constituting a state of unbearable pressure on our people, and have undertaken an unprecedented bloody military occupation, to which I have referred as well.

One issue preoccupying the Palestinian side, which we do not approve of, is the bombings that have taken place in Israel. We do not condone such acts. We have clearly condemned them, as we have condemned all acts of violence against civilians. But in order to understand events correctly, this wave of explosions did not begin until much time had passed after the beginning of the bloody Israeli military campaign last September.

How can this dangerous situation be brought to an end, and how can we return to the path of peace? In our opinion, dealing with the situation on the ground in an effective and speedy manner should take place within a political context, because we believe that you cannot separate security or the actual situation on the ground from the political vision and the future that awaits the two sides.

What we certainly believe is that dealing with the situation on the ground cannot be achieved by the illogical attempt to put the burden on the Palestinian side, as Israel and some parties are trying to do. For our part, we have clearly declared our acceptance of the report of the Mitchell Committee, and we have called for the comprehensive implementation of the recommendations of the report, which aim at restoring the situation to what it was before September 2000 and towards the resumption of the peace process.

For its part, the Israeli Government has frequently expressed its animosity towards the Committee and its report. Mr. Sharon said before the report was issued that Israel's acceptance of the Committee's establishment was a strategic mistake. After the report was issued the Israeli Government said that it did not accept the recommendation regarding the cessation of settlement activity and did not accept the criticism in the report directed at the Israeli Army. Finally, the Israeli Government said that it accepted the report. Great, but in return, it invented the notion of the separate stages of the implementation of the report, then invented this seven-day cooling-off period that should precede implementation of the recommendations as a condition for such implementation.

How can the cooling-off period be achieved without the joint implementation of the recommendations by the two sides? If such a cooling down can be achieved before the implementation, why should we need these recommendations to begin with? In short, we believe that this Israeli position is, at best, unrealistic and impractical and impedes the implementation of the recommendations. At worst, it is an expression of the rejection of the report and a means to bury it. This is the truth.

We call for the immediate, comprehensive and scrupulous implementation of the recommendations contained in the report, and we call upon the parties, particularly those that have participated in its formulation, to adhere to it and to push in this direction.

As for the general political context, a matter that cannot be avoided, we once more declare our commitment to signed agreements and our commitment to negotiate on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), taking into consideration the developments in previous discussions between the two sides with the aim of reaching a final agreement on all issues, including Jerusalem, refugees and the borders. We call upon the Israeli side to declare the same commitment and to relinquish the attempts to circumvent the signed agreements and seek partial solutions instead of a final settlement. We, of course, also call upon all other concerned parties to affirm the same position.

It is saddening that what is currently happening, and the prevailing situation threatening the region as a whole, come after the parties got close to reaching a final settlement and to achieving peace. In all cases, we believe that there is a solution to the conflict. It is a clear solution, and, more than that, it is achievable. But we need the assistance of the international community to achieve such a solution, and we hope that this will be the case. Towards that end, we hope that this time the Council will succeed in contributing to stopping the bloodshed. To start the path of return to negotiations and peace, we have proposed modest goals to be included in the draft resolution, because we want the Council to succeed, which is an extremely important matter to all parties. Let us work together to achieve this.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Permanent Observer of Palestine for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Israel, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Lancry (Israel): At the outset, Mr. President, I wish to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the Security Council and to congratulate your predecessor, the distinguished Permanent Representative of China, on his most able leadership of the Council.

My country, Israel, is a country that seeks peace. This may sound commonplace, but in this tormented period when hatred and mistrust are deepening between Israelis and Palestinians, even such a cliché becomes essential in order to rebuild the lost language of peace and to recover the spirit of the acceptance of the other. Our desire to live in peace and coexistence with our Palestinian partners and our neighbours in the region is imperishable. Our hand remains extended in peace, as it has for 53 years of Israeli statehood. We do, however, believe in a vital, urgent and necessary need, namely, to end the current Israeli-Palestinian setback.

In this spirit, the State of Israel has accepted the Mitchell report, in all its sequential aspects, as a road map leading back to the negotiating table, and we remain committed to it. Even before the Tenet ceasefire took effect, Israel implemented its own unilateral ceasefire. Unfortunately, these actions were met with no reciprocal gestures from the Palestinian side. Consequently, 36 Israelis have been killed and 292 have been injured in over 1,300 separate attacks since the Tenet plan took effect in mid-June.

Thus, today's meeting takes place not only against the backdrop that the Palestinians have depicted, but also against the backdrop of ongoing Palestinian terrorism, which in the last two weeks has escalated to an average of more than 20 attacks per day, with scores of Israelis killed or injured. It appears that despite the recent atrocity in Jerusalem, which echoes a similar atrocity in Tel Aviv in early June — not to mention the daily gunfire attacks everywhere — the Palestinians have no scruples about convening a meeting of the Security Council to discuss Israeli actions.

This unprecedented escalation of Palestinian terror is not in itself a new phenomenon in Israel. We have been facing a calculated and orchestrated campaign of Palestinian terror for more than 10 months; bombings and shootings in civilian areas have become a fact of life for many Israelis. What has changed — and to catastrophic effect — is the frequency, intensity and horror of the attacks.

Ten days ago, a Palestinian suicide bomber walked into a crowded Jerusalem restaurant during the lunch hour and detonated a powerful explosive charge, sending glass, chairs, tables and even human beings flying through the air and out into the street. Reports from the scene described a nightmare of chaos, wanton destruction and intense human suffering. When the dust had settled, 15 people lay dead and more than 130 were injured. Among them were seven children, five members of one family — a mother and father and three of their children, ages 14, 4 and 2 — a tourist from Brazil, and a pregnant American schoolteacher.

Before Israel could fully grieve for that senseless loss, another bomb ripped apart a coffee house near the northern coastal city of Haifa. There too, a Palestinian suicide bomber entered a small, crowded café and detonated powerful explosives. Twenty-one Israelis were injured in the blast, and it was only by a miracle that no one was killed.

Both those attacks bear a frightening resemblance to the Palestinian suicide bombing outside a Tel Aviv nightclub on 1 June 2001. In what has now become a familiar pattern, a Palestinian terrorist situated himself among scores of civilians waiting to enter, and detonated an explosive that ended 21 young lives.

What would any Government do in the face of ongoing daily acts of terrorism that spilled blood on the streets and denied its citizens a sense of security?

Prior to the Jerusalem bombing, Israel provided the Palestinian Authority with a list of terrorists engaged in planning impending attacks on Israel. The Palestinian Authority ignored the information on that list and, in flagrant violation of signed agreements, took no action whatsoever. On that list figured Abdullah Barghouti, who was the mastermind of the Jerusalem bombing. Had the Palestinian Authority fulfilled its obligation to renounce terrorism, had the Palestinian Authority been serious about implementing its part of a ceasefire and arrested Abdullah Barghouti, 15 lives would have been spared and an immeasurable rise in mistrust and suspicion between our two peoples could have been avoided.

Obviously, terrorism has become the Palestinian Authority's preferred way to deal with the peace process. The Palestinian leadership, in fact, has much to lose by using terrorism for the achievement of political ends.

That is a message that Israel should not be alone in expressing. Terrorism is a global issue. The entire free world has a vital interest in making clear that terrorism is totally unacceptable and that no gains will ever accrue to those who wilfully attack civilians. Chairman Arafat must receive a clear and unequivocal message from the Security Council and from the international community: terrorism is unacceptable.

In the light of the security situation, Israel was forced to take action in defence of its citizens. These were not actions that we wished to take; they were actions that were forced upon us, and at the same time they were indispensable.

Israel is obligated, under every norm of international law and custom, to take concerted action in defence of its citizens. In that regard, we should be treated like any other nation that faces armed aggression, let alone continuous violence directed specifically at innocent civilians, seeking to cut them down as they go about the most ordinary aspects of their lives.

The use of human beings as bombs is an alarming phenomenon that presents no obvious response. Individuals who are willing to sacrifice their lives in such a gruesome manner will not be deterred by ordinary means. Our response must therefore be adapted and geared towards cutting off terror at its source because, once it is unleashed, it is virtually impossible to stop.

In the face of international scrutiny of Israel with regard to its alleged violation of international norms, I wish to draw the Council's attention to the fact that Palestinian suicide bombings, which engender death and devastation, cannot be regarded as perfectly judicial. They do not exemplify a moderate use of force and do not comply with international law and human rights. They constitute a unique challenge that requires adapted responses.

In the fight against Palestinian terror, no one is more obligated than Chairman Arafat. It was his commitment, expressed in his letter to the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, which qualified him as a partner for peace. What is more, no one is better positioned to contain terrorism at its source than Chairman Arafat. Instead of doing so, as he has repeatedly promised, Chairman Arafat has himself become a party to terrorism. He has released terrorists from jail; he has used the official Palestinian media to incite them to violence; he has refused to re-arrest them even when he knew they were about to commit murder; and he has invited the Hamas and Islamic Jihad terror organizations to join him in a unity coalition. As long as the Palestinians maintain that policy, Israel will continue to take the steps it deems necessary to keep the Palestinian machinery of killing off its streets.

We have waited long enough — nearly a year in fact –and we have given the Palestinian leadership every opportunity to fulfil its obligations and to contain terrorism. After the Mitchell Committee submitted its recommendations calling, first and foremost, for an end to the violence, we waited. After a Palestinian suicide bomber took down 21 young people at a Tel Aviv nightclub, we waited. After Chairman Arafat agreed to the terms of the Tenet ceasefire, we waited. Each time, we waited, and we ended up waiting only for the next attack. We cannot be expected to wait any more.

Israel's action in Jenin was intended to achieve what Chairman Arafat has thus far failed to achieve, namely the prevention of violence. Our response was a limited one, taken in a city that has become a hub of suicide bombers. No casualties were incurred as a result of that preventive action that undoubtedly saved the lives of innocent civilians.

Israel's actions are in accord not only with agreements signed between the parties, but also with established principles of international law, most pertinently the right to self-defence.

After the devastating carnage that littered the streets of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, it can no longer be denied that Israel is genuinely under attack.

Similarly, Israel's seizure of Orient House and the Abu Dis compound is not a takeover, it is not occupation, it is not an act of revenge, but an act of self-defence. What we have done is take temporary control of buildings that were being used by official Palestinian forces to assist terrorists in carrying out their murderous attacks. Israeli forces recovered intelligence reports and illegal weapons from Orient House that constitute irrefutable proof that the site was being used for political and military purposes.

Israel has agreed to the presence in Jerusalem of Palestinian institutions serving the communal needs of the city's Palestinian population. A letter to that effect was sent by Foreign Minister Shimon Peres to Norwegian Foreign Minister Hoist. However, this letter clearly refers only to economic, social, educational and cultural institutions. Orient House was, in fact, being used for much more, as indicated by the intelligence materials and illegal arms found by Israeli forces that entered the site. Thus, Palestinian actions there are not protected under the terms specified in Shimon Peres's letter.

The legality of our actions in Abu Dis conforms to the same principle. Palestinian forces headquartered in the District Governor's compound in Abu Dis — including the security forces, Force 17, the Palestinian police, the intelligence services and others — have been engaged in organizing and instigating terrorist activities. In so doing, they have failed to comply with their obligations under Israeli-Palestinian agreements, including, inter alia, Chairman Arafat's cardinal undertaking to renounce the use of terrorism and violence and to resolve all outstanding issues through negotiations.

In taking control of these buildings, which have been used to coordinate terrorist activity, Israel has acted in full compliance with its responsibilities under signed agreements. Under those agreements, the areas in question are designated as Areas B and C, areas in which Israel is responsible for maintaining security and for fighting terror. The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement stipulates that not only is Israel permitted to take security measures in those areas but, in fact, it is required to do so. This is our moral obligation, and our response is driven by this obligation.

Similar principles apply to Orient House, as well. Under signed agreements, Jerusalem is specifically excluded from Palestinian jurisdiction. Under the Interim Agreement, Palestinian Authority offices may be located only in areas under Palestinian territorial jurisdiction in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Notwithstanding, Palestinian offices have been located in Orient House, in violation of agreed arrangements.

In both cases, in that of Orient House, as well as in that of the District Governor's compound in Abu Dis, the Palestinian leadership, and particularly Chairman Arafat, must take into account that converting terrorism into a political tool will entail a political loss.

Israel regards the draft resolution before the Council as a biased and one-sided document that seeks to place the onus of the present crisis squarely on one party. In fact, it requires virtually nothing of the Palestinian side. It does not call for a commitment to resolutely fight terror, nor does it call for the re-arrest of terrorists currently planning future attacks on Israel.

Even with regard to violence itself, the draft resolution, in operative paragraph 1, uses a sort of coded language that refers exclusively to Israel and thereby frees the Palestinians from their own obligations to end the violence. There is no "call on the two sides", but rather, a sophisticated semantic texture that explicitly designates Israel as the unique source of violence and implicitly absolves the Palestinian side of its killing of 156 Israelis and the injuring of hundreds more. With regard to negotiations, let me reiterate that we are willing to undertake them once the terror ends, on the basis of existing signed agreements.

Even more, the draft resolution's supposed fidelity to the recommendations of the Mitchell report is entirely disingenuous. Nowhere does the spirit of the Mitchell Committee permeate this document with regard to the obligations of the Palestinian side. The Palestinians, who have repeatedly called for the implementation of the Mitchell recommendations, seem to have forgotten precisely what they are. Allow me to remind them.

The Mitchell report calls, first and foremost, for an unconditional cessation of violence, followed by a cooling-off period, then a series of confidence-building measures and ultimately a return to negotiations. The report further states

> "the Palestinian Authority should make clear through concrete action to Palestinians and Israelis alike that terrorism is reprehensible and unacceptable"

and by taking all measures "to prevent terrorist operations and to punish perpetrators".

I would like to ask, where in the draft resolution is there any similar reference to the Palestinian obligations regarding terrorism? I would also like to ask why operative paragraph 1 does not call on the Palestinian side to put an end to the unspeakable practice of suicide bombings.

Moreover, even though the Mitchell report calls for an incremental series of steps, the draft resolution totally ignores the sequential procedure. Since the Mitchell report refers to a direct, face-to-face approach, there appears to be no justification for further complicating matters by subjecting implementation to international supervision and scrutiny or by imposing any kind of monitoring mechanism that has not been negotiated and agreed to by both sides. Such a selective reading of the Mitchell report does not advance the cause of peace.

In calling for international protection, as stipulated in the preamble of the draft resolution, the Palestinian leadership is once again exposing its duplicity in seeking exemption from the consequences of their own aggressive and violent behaviour. How can the Palestinians claim the need for protection while they kill Israelis by the dozens on an ongoing basis?

Israel therefore remains opposed to an international presence in this context, as that would contravene both the spirit and the letter of direct bilateral face-to-face negotiations. More importantly, such a presence would be totally ineffective in preventing terrorist attacks like the recent suicide bombings in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. An international presence cannot dismantle the bomb factories of Hamas and Islamic Jihad; it cannot intercept suicide bombers on their way to carry out attacks; it cannot stop snipers and mortar fire from targeting Israeli civilians.

In short, an international presence cannot return peace and quiet to our region; that requires the concerted effort of Chairman Arafat, who cannot be permitted to escape his commitment and his duty. Rather than hiding behind an internationally supplied shield, which in any case must be agreed by both sides, the Palestinians must fulfil their obligations to renounce terror and violence.

If more evidence of the limitations of an international presence is needed, the behaviour of UNIFIL vis-à-vis Hezbollah is highly instructive. When a confrontation over control of two vehicles, using the abduction of three Israeli soldiers on 8 October 2000, arose between UNIFIL — a well-trained and well-armed force representing international legitimacy — and a small group of Hezbollah terrorists, UNIFIL surrendered to the demands of Hezbollah. According to the recent United Nations report of the fact-finding team led by Joseph Connor, senior officials in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations expressed grave concern over this fact. What are we therefore to assume would be the reaction of a team of observers in the territories — or any other international mechanism — to a potential confrontation or to the daily harassment by Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Tanzim?

All calls for an international presence have been predicated on the mutual acquiescence of both sides. For its part, Israel does not accept such a presence. It would be ineffectual and would set a dangerous precedent by relieving the responsible party of its international and bilateral obligations. The only way to break the cycle of violence is to prevail upon Chairman Arafat to comply with acceptable norms of behaviour and rid the territory under his jurisdiction of this vile scourge.

It is for these reasons that we find the current draft resolution totally unacceptable, and we thoroughly reject it.

Under the destructive and painful influence of the violence that has rocked the region for 11 months, we seem to have lost our ability to speak in the language of peace. Israelis still recall the courageous moral and political stance of the late President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, who, with his proclamation of "No more war", broke open an emotional and political avenue that permitted the historic breakthrough that constituted Israel's treaty of peace with Egypt.

We have read Chairman Arafat's commitment to renounce terror and violence, and for a time we saw in him the image of a new peacemaker. But his current terror alliance, the education in hatred and exclusion that permeates Palestinian society, and the campaign of incitement and demonization of Israel and the Jewish people that fills Palestinian television and newspapers are not only harming the Palestinian people and their will to exist in peace, but are undermining the faith of the people of Israel in our ability to render war and confrontation a relic of the past.

We must return ourselves to the lost language of peace. The recommendations of the Mitchell Committee must be fully implemented without delay, including, first and foremost, an immediate and total cessation of violence. There is nothing that must be discussed or negotiated. It is a simple and straightforward necessity that requires concerted action, not meaningless and empty proclamations.

I invite our Palestinian partners to join us in implementing — not declaring, but implementing — the true and genuine ceasefire. Let us lay down our arms and return once more to the process of building a future based on respect, coexistence, cooperation and peace.

Mr. Maiga (Mali) *(spoke in French)*: I would like to start by thanking you, Mr. President, for having responded promptly to my delegation's request, on behalf of the group of Islamic States Members of the United Nations, for an urgent meeting of the Security Council to examine the serious situation prevailing in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem.

I would also like to thank Ambassador Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer for Palestine, for his statement. It constitutes an extremely useful update today as we debate the question of Palestine. I would also like to present the sincere condolences of my delegation to the families of the Palestinian martyrs who have fallen on the field of honour and to hope for the prompt recovery of the thousands of injured.

The overall situation in the occupied territories, since we last considered the question in March 2001, has deteriorated significantly with a further escalation of violence, the excessive and ongoing use of force by Israel, so-called targeted assassinations of Palestinian political figures, in violation of international law, recourse to combat aircraft against Palestinian towns, the permanent blockading of the territories, massive human rights violations and today the occupation by the Israeli authorities of Orient House and eight Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem, as well as an armed incursion into the city of Jenin, under the control of the Palestinian Authority.

This dark picture clearly shows the endless suffering of the Palestinian people. These acts of sheer provocation by the Israeli authorities show a worrisome turn in events in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the effect that they not only seek to deprive the Holy City of Al-Quds of its particular legal status recognized by Israel since 1967, but are also a flagrant violation of the agreements between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority. This is why the commitment of all of us, in particular the Security Council, is necessary to bring them to an end, redress matters and avoid the unfortunate consequences that might jeopardize international peace and security in the region of the Middle East.

On 7 October 2000 the Council adopted resolution 1322 (2000), in which it condemned the excessive use of force by Israel, the occupying Power, and called upon Israel to discharge its obligations consistent with the Fourth Geneva Convention, which applies to all the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem. Today we are compelled to acknowledge that almost 10 months after the adoption of that resolution, Israel continues to have recourse to force, as we see in the raids it perpetrated on Palestinian cities on 18 May, tank incursions in autonomous territory, and the intensification of the hateful targeted-assassination campaign.

Confronted with this situation, Mali — as well as Palestine, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the rest of the international community — resolutely condemns the excessive use of force by Israel in response to protests by Palestinian civilians in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem. Mali also condemns measures to lock down the territories, restrictions on the circulation of people and goods and the refusal to pay to the Palestinian Authority its customs revenue, as well as all other measures of collective punishment. These measures have a disastrous impact on the Palestinian economy and on the daily life of the inhabitants, and they transform the life in the territories into a constant struggle for survival.

My delegation remains convinced that the situation would not have deteriorated to this extent if, in December 2000 and then in March 2001 the Council had reacted favourably to the draft resolutions presented by the high-level conclave of the Non-Aligned, which merely called for deployment of United Nations observers in the field in order to protect Palestinian civilians from the violence and crimes perpetrated by the occupying Power, Israel.

Events throughout the territories clearly demonstrate that deploying observers remains a topical issue. Such a deployment would be a positive contribution by the Security Council to the peace process and would create a favourable climate for the resumption of dialogue and negotiation. Better yet, the question of observers falls clearly within the debate currently under way within the Council on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, as well as on conflict prevention. The Council cannot adopt standards and a type of behaviour that are different in the case of Palestinian civilians, because this would jeopardize its credibility and would confirm the accusations of a much-derided policy of double standards whenever Israel is at stake. Inaction on the part of the Council would only increase tension and lead to a worsening of the situation. Furthermore, the impunity that the Israeli authorities seem to enjoy further intensifies the cycle of violence.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that my delegation hopes that today's meeting will lead to the taking of enforceable decisions and immediate action that reflect the primary responsibility of the Council in maintaining international peace and security. Indeed, the Council is duty bound to play its part and fully shoulder the burden of its responsibilities by applying various forms of pressure to Israel so that it brings to an end its policy of terror against the Palestinian people and reverses the serious and illegal measures that it has taken with respect to Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem.

Before concluding, I would like to reaffirm my delegation's support for the peace initiatives of Egypt and Jordan and the recommendations of the Mitchell fact-finding committee. If implemented by the parties, these different measures would help them to emerge from the present deadlock and put and end to the violence.

Mr. Ward (Jamaica): It is with a great deal of disappointment that we note that events in the occupied Palestinian territories have made it necessary for the Security Council to convene this meeting. My delegation was heartened by the seemingly positive developments in the Middle East peace process, which only a year ago offered a glimmer of hope that, at long last, both sides were moving closer towards a common understanding, necessary for a comprehensive and lasting peace agreement. Both sides seemed to be willing to take the bold steps necessary to bridge the divide which separates them. Both sides seemed willing to exercise the political will to bring the conflict to a lasting and just conclusion.

However, what has transpired since 28 September 2000 has proved to be more tragic than anyone could have imagined. In the 10 months since the current outbreak of violence began, over 750 persons — Palestinians and Israelis — have died. The concessions, which were painfully won over several years of arduous negotiation, have evaporated, and the gains attained by confidence-building measures have been reversed, with relations between the parties being at their worst level in decades.

The parties have not heeded the call by the Council, contained in resolution 1322 (2000), for the immediate cessation of violence and for all necessary steps to be taken to ensure that the cycle of violence be brought to an end. The Council has committed itself to fully supporting the role of the Secretary-General in facilitating the peace process, and my delegation urges the Secretary-General to explore every possible avenue for peace.

My delegation supported the convening of this meeting today, not because we were naive enough to think that after a day-long series of speeches the parties would be motivated to salvage the peace process but, rather, because we believe that it is crucial that the Security Council continue to offer its help and support to the peace process. If we can bring the parties back from the brink of total chaos and offer them hope that the peace process is not dead, then we will have achieved significant progress. It is the responsibility of the Security Council — indeed, it is our duty — to be engaged on this issue, and the international community expects no less from us.

Those who would suggest that the Security Council has no role in dealing with this issue are wrong, and have been wrong over the past several months. We cannot stand by and watch total disregard for human life and property become the order of the day.

My delegation maintains that the provisions of the Sharm el-Sheikh agreement and the recommendations of the Mitchell Committee remain the best basis to move the peace process forward. In this regard, we maintain that the parties should immediately take steps towards implementing their commitments under the agreement. Specifically, the parties need to undertake the following four key steps.

First, they must unequivocally end all violence. They should take immediate, concrete measures to end the current confrontation, maintain calm and prevent the recurrence of violent events. In order to achieve this, both sides need to take the steps necessary to enable a return to the situation that existed prior to the current crisis, including restoring law and order, redeploying military forces, eliminating points of friction, enhancing security cooperation and ending the economic blockade of the occupied Palestinian territories.

Secondly, both parties should resume confidence-building measures; the parties should resume their efforts to identify, condemn and discourage incitement in all its forms. Both sides should take concrete actions to demonstrate that terrorism in all its forms, and extrajudicial killings, are unacceptable.

Thirdly, the Israeli Government must freeze all settlement activity and both sides should undertake to preserve and protect holy sites sacred to the traditions of Jews, Muslims and Christians. The Israeli Government should also reverse action taken recently against Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in and around occupied East Jerusalem. Fourthly, the Israelis and Palestinians should resume negotiations on the basis of agreements reached prior to 28 September 2000.

Jamaica, for its part, reiterates its unqualified support for efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace within the framework of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). In March this year, Jamaica supported sending an observation team to the Palestinian territories, a position that did not receive the needed support of members of the Council. We still believe that the deployment of such a force could act as a deterrent to further violence and as a confidence-building measure between the Palestinians and the Israelis. We should ask ourselves how many lives could have been saved and how far the peace process could have advanced had we exercised the political will and approved sending observers into the field several months ago.

We note that, since that time, the issue of a monitoring mechanism has received the support of important regional and multilateral organizations, which have concluded that under the current circumstances, third-party monitoring should be accepted by both parties, as it would serve their interests in implementing the Mitchell Committee recommendations.

The creation of a mechanism to help the parties implement the recommendations of the Mitchell Committee report would create a more stable situation on the ground. We hope that the Israelis and the Palestinians will find these proposals to be acceptable in the quest for peace. The Security Council must give its full backing to this effort.

Despite repeated references to a draft resolution, to my delegation's certain knowledge there is no draft resolution or outcome document before the Security Council for consideration at this time. It is my delegation's hope, however, that when the Council is ready to take action, as it should, it will be possible to act in unity and consensus in advancing the cause of peace in the Middle East.

Decisions taken in the Security Council following this meeting will be a litmus test of the Council's resolve to assist the peace process in the Middle East. Whether we choose to take concrete action or whether we choose just to talk will ultimately affect the way that future historians judge our contribution — the contribution of the Security Council and of the international community — to the resolution of the conflict in the Middle East. Can the Security Council act responsibly?

Mr. Cunningham (United States): The United States is deeply concerned by the situation in the Middle East. We approach the tenth anniversary of the Madrid Conference in October against the backdrop of the most serious confrontation between Israelis and Palestinians in a decade. Palestinians and Israelis have been traumatized by almost a year of violence and disruption. There has been great suffering on both sides. We are deeply saddened by the tragic loss of life, including of children. This violence has taken a tremendous toll and seriously undermined the working partnership that began with the signing of the Oslo Declaration of Principles.

The United States and others in the international community — including the other co-sponsor, Russia, and our Secretary-General — are working hard to end the violence and to restore some measure of confidence between the parties. It is precisely because of the gravity of events on the ground that we question the appropriateness and effectiveness of any action here in New York. What is required now is not rhetoric, not debate that polarizes an already volatile situation and certainly not an effort to condemn one side with unbalanced charges or to impose unworkable ideas that will not change the reality on the ground. That is not the way for the Council to fulfil its duties. It must not be drawn into an effort that will make lasting peace more difficult.

Instead, what should guide action and debate is what can be done practically, working with both sides to end the violence and transform the environment in a way that will permit the resumption of a political process and a return to negotiations. It is towards this objective that the United States and others here have been working intensively. Our pledge is that we will continue our efforts.

It is critical that the terror and violence end. It is imperative that everything possible be done to pre-empt terror, arrest those responsible for terrorism, bring them to justice and end the incitement that creates an environment for their actions. There can be no justification or excuse for these actions. These horrific attacks have killed and wounded Israelis indiscriminately and have claimed American lives as well.

The Palestinian Authority must act and make it unmistakably clear by its own actions that it will not tolerate these activities. Without such action, the situation will only deteriorate further.

At the same time, Israel should also avoid actions that might escalate the situation, and take steps on the ground, of both an economic and a security nature, that will alleviate pressure on Palestinians and transform the reality of their daily lives.

There is no magic wand to accomplish these objectives, no statement, resolution, nor action by the Council that can remedy this tragic situation. But there is a pathway forward, which the United States and others in this room have endorsed. The recommendations of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-finding Committee, led by former Senator Mitchell and other distinguished international statesmen from Turkey, Norway and the European Union, provide a realistic, practical, comprehensive approach to dealing with this crisis. These recommendations have been accepted by the parties themselves and provide a road map for them to follow in order to end the violence, rebuild confidence and change the dynamic of grievance and violence so that Israelis and Palestinians can resume a political process again.

The Fact-Finding Committee's recommendations rightly call initially for an unconditional end to the violence. Indeed, there can be no progress, let alone meaningful negotiations, without it. The United States has taken the lead in working with the parties to develop a security work plan for implementing a ceasefire. At the same time, the report ends with a call for returning to negotiations. These negotiations will allow the parties to address the underlying issues that fuel their conflict and to return to a path towards peace. The United States continues to believe that the bases for these negotiations are Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principles embodied in the Madrid Conference.

Simply and sadly put, there are no quick or easy solutions to this bitter conflict. There are no shortcuts in this Council or elsewhere. Peace cannot be imposed; it has to be worked for. Implementation of the Mitchell recommendations, however difficult, remains the only viable pathway forward. And we call upon those gathered here today to support ongoing efforts towards that end.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation has been following with deep concern the acute conflict between the

Palestinian and Israeli peoples that has now lasted for almost a year without let-up. Almost every day the international community has witnessed scenes of horrible terrorist acts, which are then followed by very emotionally charged acts of retaliation. As a result the Palestinian territories and the Middle East as a whole are becoming increasingly destabilized. Unfortunately, we must recognize that the peace dialogue between the Palestinians and Israelis has been greatly set back, and all the progress achieved through incredibly intense efforts has been obliterated.

Since the outbreak of the conflict, Russia, as a co-sponsor of the Middle East peace process, has been making most vigorous efforts to put an end to the violence, to stabilize the situation as soon as possible and to return to seeking a comprehensive settlement for the region. This issue has continued to be a focus of attention for the President of Russia and for the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who is maintaining contact with the Israeli and Palestinian leadership, with the Secretary-General and with his colleagues in the United States, in European Union States and in Arab countries. The special representative of the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs is almost always in the Middle East, where together with other international mediators he works daily with the Palestinians and the Israelis.

In this connection we believe that current efforts must be focused above all on promptly launching the implementation of the agreements that have already been entered into by the two sides. The recommendations contained in the report of the Mitchell Committee must be used as a platform for a settlement. The report has the advantage of having been approved by both the Palestinians and the Israelis, and the Mitchell plan is also particularly relevant, insofar as it covers all the key components of a future normalization process and as it outlines a road map of how to get from a ceasefire and an end to the violence to confidence-building measures and the resumption of political dialogue.

We fully realize the complexity of achieving this goal. Time is becoming increasingly of the essence since the daily bloodshed is strengthening rising mutual distrust. We cannot allow the logic of inevitable confrontation to take hold in the region. We see the top priority today as being the urgent end to confrontations between Palestinians and Israelis. Special responsibility for this lies with the leaders of both sides, who must begin a direct dialogue so as to undertake concrete steps to de-escalate the tensions, put an end to all types of violence and provocation, adopt measures to normalize the situation and resume the negotiation process. The Palestinian and Israeli leadership must demonstrate political will, must step back from the harsh legacy of the past and must take courageous decisions in favour of peace. We hope that such an understanding exists on both sides of the conflict. This brings to mind the words that history rewards political courage.

The Palestinian Authority leadership must undertake decisive steps to put an end to extremist activities and to prevent terrorist acts and violence. The Israelis must refrain from methods of repression such as shelling Palestinian targets, sending troops into areas that are under full control of the Palestinian administration, carrying out extrajudiciary reprisals and seizing official Palestinian institutions. A redressing of the situation would be helped by the urgent resumption of cooperation in the area of security, with the consequent resumption of political dialogue based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principles of the Madrid Conference.

For its part, the Russian co-sponsor will continue to maintain intensive contacts with the Palestinian and Israeli leadership and other interested parties, with a view to halting the dangerous escalation in the Middle East.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): There has been escalation recently in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Recent suicide bombings inside Israel have resulted in heavy civilian casualties. The Israeli side, however, has resorted time and again to the excessive use of arms, closing the Orient House by force, which houses the office of the Palestine Liberation Organization in East Jerusalem. For a time, it even sent troops to occupy the self-governing Palestinian city Jenin on the West Bank of the River Jordan, leading to further exacerbation of the situation.

These latest developments have caused deep concern in the international community. We support the Security Council in convening this public debate today. The United Nations should make active efforts to end the bloodshed in the conflict between Israel and Palestine and to ease tension in the region as soon as possible. The Chinese delegation condemns all violent activities leading to the escalation of the conflict and to civilian casualties. We strongly appeal to the two sides to exercise restraint and to stop all forms of violence. We call on the Israeli Government to return the Orient House and other occupied Palestinian buildings to the Palestinian side immediately. With help from the international community, the two sides should implement, as soon as possible, the relevant recommendations of the Mitchell report and create favourable conditions for the resumption of peace talks.

In recent years, the Security Council has held discussions and has adopted resolutions and presidential statements on issues such as the prevention of armed conflict and the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Now, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is escalating. The international community has placed high expectations on the United Nations. It is our hope that Council members will be able to make an active, practical and constructive effort in the spirit of resolutions and presidential statements already adopted to hold serious consultations on the grave situation of the violent Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as adopt necessary measures to be immediately taken.

Council members should put differences aside and work to achieve a consensus as soon as possible so as to send a strong message to both sides of the conflict and the entire international community that violence must be stopped and tensions eased. The Security Council has already held much discussion on sending international observers to the region. The idea has gained more attention and support from the international community. We hope that the Israeli side will respond positively to the appeals and advice of the international community and take this recommendation into earnest consideration.

Faced with the serious situation whereby the Israeli Palestinian conflict is getting worse, we believe that efforts from a third party, especially from those with influence on both sides of the conflict, are vital to make the two sides cool down, stop violence and return to the negotiation table. This is clear to every outsider. We also believe that, as the United Nations body that shoulders the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, it is only right and natural for the Security Council to pay close attention to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We also support the Secretary-General in continuing to play an active role in this issue.

Finally, I would like to thank colleagues for the kind words addressed to China on its presidency last month.

Mr. Eldon (United Kingdom): I should first like to associate my delegation with the statement that will be made on behalf of the European Union by the representative of Belgium later in the debate.

The United Kingdom is gravely concerned at the continuing violence in Israel and the occupied territories and the blockage of progress on Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations.

The core problem is characterized by a loss of the trust that previously existed between the parties. We have heard them both this morning. Israelis doubt that the Palestinian Authority is a true partner for peace. Equally, Palestinians doubt that Israel is willing to move forward to negotiations that stand a real chance of meeting their legitimate aspirations.

In these circumstances, the Council must demonstrate its unity and encourage the parties to focus on their clear obligations to move the process forward. Our debate today should not divide the Council. To the contrary, it is our responsibility today to send a crystal clear message to the parties of our common commitment to support efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region. That message must also emphasize our total condemnation of extremism and violence as a means to achieve political ends. For it is only through dialogue that Israelis and Palestinians can achieve security and peace.

The first priority for all involved must be the implementation, as others have said, without further delay of the recommendations of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-finding Committee, the Mitchell Committee. This integral package offers a road map, endorsed by the international community and accepted by both parties, for Israel and the Palestinian Authority to move from this crisis, through the ceasefire and confidence-building measures set out in the Committee's report, to a return to negotiations. Those negotiations should, as before, aim for a permanent settlement based on the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the principle of "land for peace".

We call on both parties to take immediate action to de-escalate the current crisis. They can achieve this by fulfilling the obligations they accepted when they accepted the Mitchell Committee's report. Both parties must tackle incitement to violence and both parties must bring to justice those who commit violent acts.

I have already spoken of our concern at the continuing violence in the Middle East. The United Kingdom condemns utterly all terrorist acts, including suicide bombings against Israeli civilians. There can be no excuse for targeting civilians going about their ordinary business on the streets of Israeli cities. These actions are abhorrent and, ultimately, futile. The Palestinian Authority must make a 100 per cent effort to reduce violence. That should include sustained and greater efforts to pre-empt bombings by extremists and bringing those responsible to justice.

Israel has unfulfilled obligations too. We call on the Government of Israel to show the utmost restraint in its use of force. We call for lifting the closures that cripple the Palestinian economy and prevent Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem from going about their daily lives, from working and from receiving an education. These restrictions achieve only resentment and anger, which will not help achieve a settlement. We call on Israel to transfer to the Palestinian Authority all revenues owed, to freeze all settlement activity and to fulfil its other obligations under Mitchell, without delay. We have also repeatedly called for an end to the Israeli policy of assassination of suspected Palestinian militants. That only fuels further violence and hatred.

We are concerned at the continuing closure of Orient House and other institutions in Jerusalem. We call on Israel to reverse the closure and to return the archives of Orient House without delay. It is a further setback to the prospects for peace that Orient House — which has never been a centre of terrorism and extremism, but always a resource for Palestinian engagement in negotiations — should be prevented from operating.

We call on Israel to refrain from the demolition of Palestinian houses, which risks inflaming an already volatile situation.

Finally, I want to underline that the international community has a responsibility to help the parties return to a political process to resolve their differences. We in the Council should not complicate that process, but assist it. In our discussion today, we should recognize the suffering of civilians — Israelis and Palestinians alike — and send a clear message to the parties. The basis for a settlement has eroded in the last 11 months. The parties now have a responsibility, through their words and actions, to rebuild it.

Mr. Doutriaux (France) (*spoke in French*): Belgium will speak later on behalf of the European Union. France fully associates itself with what will be said by the representative of Belgium.

The situation in the Middle East, including Jerusalem, is worrisome. The escalation of violence is tragic. Since our last debate, that violence has increased further. More children died yesterday. History seems to be going backward. Two peoples are suffering and descending into a deadly, suicidal, madness. This infernal logic must end. The spirit of peace must gain the upper hand.

It is right that the Security Council should once again to be seized with these grave developments, whose tragic and deadly escalation we can only deplore. It is now high time to break with the sterile logic of force and violence and to see to it that we renew without delay a dialogue on the search for a political solution to the painful conflict that for over half a century has torn apart a region of the world that has particular emotional, historical and spiritual significance for many of us.

Our goal should be firmly to recall the rule of law, to guide the efforts of the parties and of all those helping them put an end to violence, ease tensions and regain the path of negotiations to lasting and just peace and security. We must do everything possible to harness the moral and political weight of the United Nations in support of a real dynamic of peace. That weight is not insignificant and can be very effective if we are united. At a time when peace and security are threatened, it is the responsibility of the Security Council to chart the course out of the sterile and deadly game of mutual accusations, provocations and aggression.

The Council cannot end the violence or seal a peace for the parties, but it can help and urge them to do so by facilitating existing initiatives and the efforts of the various partners of the Palestinians and the Israelis in the search for a solution — especially those of the United States, whose backing is essential, Russia, the European Union and its member States, Arab countries of good will such as Egypt and Jordan, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his Special Representative.

We believe that the United Nations can make a useful contribution, given the fact that the peace negotiations have broken down and the cycle of violence is increasingly out of control. We also believe that the Security Council cannot make itself heard on such a difficult issue, or influence the course of events, unless it is united.

In order to do that, we must base ourselves on a common basis that is agreed to by all. We already have such a basis, namely, the recommendations of the Mitchell report. Our Council welcomed that report on 22 May, under the presidency of Ambassador Cunningham. It also called on the parties immediately to begin to take the necessary steps to implement the report's recommendations. Those recommendations contain all the essential elements for a return to calm and a resumption of the peace process: an end to the violence, the rebuilding of confidence and the resumption of negotiations.

The Palestinians must make a 100 per cent effort to prevent terrorist actions and shootings by civilians. Whatever its provenance, terrorism is hateful, unjustifiable and intolerable. France and the European Union have on several occasions affirmed in the strongest terms their condemnation of wanton terrorist violence and have expressed their profound sympathy for the victims and their families. By agreeing to the recommendations of the Mitchell report the Palestinian Authority committed itself to prevent terrorist acts and shootings from territory under its control.

The recommendations of the Mitchell report constitute a balance and a set of measures required of the two parties. By agreeing to those recommendations Israel, for its part, has also committed itself to an immediate and unconditional cessation of violence. The Israeli Government is mistaken if it believes that destroying houses and Palestinian agricultural crops, expropriating property, extrajudicial executions, military aggression in areas under Palestinian control and the closing and illegal occupation of Palestinian institutions and properties in the territories and in Jerusalem — such as the closing of the Orient House and the theft of its archives — will make possible a return to calm.

Committed in violation of the commitments undertaken by Israel in Madrid 10 years ago, these unilateral measures of repression taken collectively against the Palestinian people are grave violations of international law, in particular of Security Council resolution 476 (1980) and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. Israel, as a Member of the United Nations, is duty-bound to respect those instruments; including in Jerusalem where, with an expectation to a final peace settlement, nothing should be done to change the status quo.

Those illegal actions must end and be rescinded. Orient House and its archives must be returned to the Palestinians without delay. Those unilateral actions only serve further to weaken the Palestinian Authority and its President, Yasser Arafat, who nevertheless remain today the necessary and obligatory interlocutors of Israel. Israel must withdraw to positions held before 28 September 2000 and stop all settlement activity in Palestinian territories, including the natural growth of existing settlements, end the closure of territories and transfer income due to the Palestinian Authority.

It would be artificial to separate security from peace. They go together. Separating them would be falling into the logic of extremism and terrorism of all stripes. Only responsible and courageous action of men and women in Palestine and Israel will see to it that those young Palestinians who have known only the closed horizon of camps will no longer live in the anguish of lack of a future and in a void of personal, professional, family and political prospects. Only courageous action on par with those great men who paid with their lives — I am thinking of Yitzhak Rabin and Anwar Sadat — can one day penetrate the shadows of vengeance, hatred, oppression and terrorism.

I would like to have a dream, one of a Middle East that is reconciled, of Palestinians living on their own territory, including Jerusalem, in the dignity of a viable, independent and democratic State to which they have a right, and of Israelis living in peace in a State with recognized and secure borders, concerned with integrating itself in a region at peace and encouraged to do so by its neighbours.

This path to peace requires a return to calm, a resumption of political dialogue among the parties and a resumption of negotiations for a just and lasting peace based on the principle of law, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace. In this spirit, as we have already stated on several occasions here and elsewhere, we believe that an impartial monitoring mechanism on the ground that is part of an extension of the work of the Mitchell Committee, as soon as it is agreed to by the parties, could help Palestinians and Israelis in their efforts to reduce tensions and could contribute to guaranteeing the results obtained.

Faced with a tragic situation, the international community and the Security Council cannot give in to despair, nor can they resign themselves to impotence. We must and we can work to bring together positive forces in favour of a restoration of a dynamic for reducing tensions and for peace in full cooperation with both parties.

Mr. Ahsan (Bangladesh): We have been witnessing in the past few weeks a dangerously escalating situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and East Jerusalem. We are extremely concerned at the continuation of the alarmingly high level of violence taking place daily and causing numerous deaths and intolerable human suffering. Apart from its implications for the peace process, the situation represents a threat to peace and security in the region and warrants consideration by the Security Council in view of the Council's role in the maintenance of international peace and security. We therefore strongly supported the request made by the member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference for holding an emergency meeting of the Council. We commend you, Mr. President, for responding to this call.

The Security Council, however, is not considering this issue for the first time, nor is it acting in a void. In our opinion, the Council has and must play its legitimate role in the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine. In its resolution 1322 (2000) of 7 October 2000, the Council called for the establishment of a mechanism of inquiry into the tragic events of the preceding few days. The Council invited the Secretary-General to continue to follow the situation and to keep the Council informed. It may be recalled that the Council also called for the immediate resumption of negotiations within the Middle East peace process on its agreed basis for achieving a final settlement of the question. These, in our view, are parameters that establish a continuing relevance for Council action on the issue.

The gravity of the situation has been stressed by previous speakers today and has also been addressed by the international community in recent days. Apart from the human suffering that the continuing violence has caused, we are gravely concerned at the unravelling of what remains of the Middle East peace process. The dynamic of events, on the one hand, and the unilateral policy of applying military force, on the other, have unmistakably contributed to this unravelling.

The cycle of violence has apparently resisted efforts to stop it. The reasons are not very far to seek. Maintaining the economic blockades and closures, destruction and other illegal measures in the occupied territories and continuation of the settlement activities are factors that stand in the way of ending violence. The Council should address this issue carefully. While the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-finding Committee — the Mitchell Committee — report clearly enumerated recommendations for the parties, we have seen attempts to avoid their implementation.

As has been done in various other forums recently, the Council should emphasize that the full implementation of the recommendations of the Fact-finding Committee, without any preconditions, is of crucial importance at the present time. Unfortunately, recent events on the ground are not giving encouraging signs for achieving that objective. The international community has made valuable investment in the peace process, in particular following the Sharm el-Sheikh meeting. We recognize and welcome these efforts at mediation. It is expected of the sponsors of these efforts to remain engaged, especially in view of the serious deterioration in the situation that threatens the agreed basis of the peace process.

We are firmly of the view that the current volatile situation calls for a continued and more intimate involvement of the international community. Bangladesh strongly endorses, therefore, the idea of establishment of a monitoring mechanism to help the parties implement the recommendations of the Committee. There is no scope to confuse the purpose of this mechanism. Clearly, allegations and counter-allegations about the bona fides of one side or the other have gone on for long enough. The time has come for all to realize that the parties need help in achieving what they have failed to achieve so far on their own.

Both sides have agreed to the full and comprehensive implementation of the Committee's recommendations. The Council should do its part to help them achieve that objective by establishing a monitoring mechanism of an international character.

Such a mechanism would have the advantage of impartially establishing the factors acting against ending the current cycle of violence, monitoring the efforts employed by parties in line with the recommendations and exerting, as a consequence, the much-needed calming influence on the situation.

Bangladesh commends the initiatives of the Secretary-General in recent months, including his visit to the region in June, as a part of his ongoing efforts to find a political solution to the crisis based on relevant United Nations resolutions. We fully endorsed the stated objective of his visit, that is, to press the two parties to implement in their entirety the recommendations of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-finding Committee. We particularly welcome his efforts during his visit to nudge the parties towards an early resumption of negotiations. We feel that he correctly emphasized the need for political contact between the parties beyond security talks. He also recognized that the international community should work with them to get them into the logic of implementation of the Mitchell plan.

We see in today's discussion the Council's responsibility, its mandate and also, in line with earlier resolutions, its obligations. We believe that the Council should call on the parties to desist from actions that contradict the spirit of the recent ceasefire agreement. Despite the widespread violence that marked the ceasefire, we believe that it remains the point of departure for any meaningful action.

However, along with the measures that the Tenet work plan outlines, there must also be commensurate action taken at the political level — actions that will affect the situation on the ground. The Israeli policy of collective punishment and targeted killings, economic blockades and deprivation and, most recently, measures such as occupation of the Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in and around occupied East Jerusalem are, in the first place, actions that must be reversed — not only because these are illegal, but also because these actions have contributed to the deterioration of an already fragile situation and aggravated the crisis of confidence between the parties.

What the Israeli policy has achieved by economically strangulating the Palestinian people and their economy has been well documented. The Secretary-General's report of 6 July 2001 to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, under the item of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly entitled "Strengthening of the coordination and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", mentions, "severe internal and external closures ... [that have] resulted in large-scale losses to the Palestinian economy, wiping out more than three years of prior growth" (A/56/123-E/2001/97, para. 5).

With a 50-per-cent income loss and with unemployment tripled, the impact on the livelihood of the Palestinian people has been devastating. In his conclusions, the Secretary-General argues in favour of a resumption of political activity leading towards a just settlement and of economic activity leading to an improvement of living conditions. That provides a useful perspective for action by the Council. We support the appeal to the international donor community to extend economic and financial assistance to the Palestinian people, and we acknowledge the crucial role it has been playing in laying the foundations for the viability and sustainability of the Palestinian economy. We call on Israel to reverse the policy of closures and economic blockades and to transfer without delay the revenue it is withholding from the Palestinian authority in contravention of signed agreements.

The reality of the current situation demands concerted action in the Council. Lack of unanimity, however, should not be used as an argument for Council inaction on this issue. We would strongly urge all concerned to evaluate the situation from the standpoint of what is expected of the Council in such a situation. In our view, the Council has a responsibility to call for the immediate implementation of the Mitchell Committee recommendations and for the launching of a viable political process. We believe the current situation, if left to the momentum it has generated, is unlikely to lead to any fruitful outcome. The language of force must be replaced with the language of peace. The painful reality remains that no such possibility exists as long as the policy of systematic, unilateral military action is in place in contravention of norms of international humanitarian law and human rights. The Security Council should support the idea of establishing a monitoring mechanism.

Mr. Jerandi (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): This meeting of the Security Council is taking place at an extremely grave and sensitive time, when the occupied

Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, are the target of the most serious Israeli practices since last year's provocation at Al-Haram Al-Sharif. The sharp deterioration in the situation of the Palestinian people has reached a frightening level.

Despite its responsibility for international peace and security, the Security Council has not been able fully to shoulder that responsibility. That has sent the wrong message to the Israeli authorities and has made it possible for them to continue their practices against the Palestinian people, their holy sites, their property and their economic infrastructure. Today's meeting reflects the urgent need — long promoted by the international community — to put an end to this serious escalation, which, owing to the presence of Israeli occupying troops, has been transformed into a policy of reacting to events rather than fully respecting international norms with a view to ending the cycle of violence.

The Israeli Government is facing off against the Palestinian people and deliberately and systematically taking retaliatory measures that run counter to the most basic human values and the norms of international law — not to mention human dignity and human rights — as reflected in the report of Ms. Mary Robinson, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Israeli Government refuses to abide by Security Council resolutions or by international law, not to speak of agreements entered into during the peace process, from Madrid to Sharm el-Sheikh. Its current policy reveals its true colours; that policy is to appear to be a victim in a constant self-defensive posture. How can we accept such a deception, when the goal of the Israeli war machine has been to use every means, including internationally prohibited weapons, to strike Palestinian cities and people, and to starve the Palestinians, confiscate their property, violate their rights, desecrate their holy places and even occupy Orient House in occupied Jerusalem along with other Palestinian institutions with legal standing under agreements signed by both parties.

Israel's arrogance has increased to the point where it is now carrying out a policy of physically liquidating Palestinian officials at a time when the Palestinian people is engaged in forms of resistance that fully accord with international law. The goal is to usurp the internationally recognized legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and to pursue the occupation of its territory.

Now, the Security Council and the international community at large must react to the highly dangerous situation in the area. The Council must take firm action to put an end once and for all to dilatory, ambiguous Israeli policies aimed at circumventing Council resolutions and agreements signed between the Palestinians and the Israeli Government. The Council must put pressure on Israel to choose dialogue and peace.

Irrespective of the magnitude of Israel's war machine and the scale of its arrogance, the legitimate rights of the Palestinians will not simply fade away. Israel's policy of dominating the Palestinian people and thwarting its aspirations will not succeed. The sacrifices made daily by the Palestinian people bear witness to the fact that it is determined to pursue its legitimate struggle to create an independent State on its own territory, with Jerusalem as its capital.

My delegation once again affirms that peace is the only way. There must be respect for negotiations in line with international legitimacy if the Middle East is to break the downward spiral of violence that bears such great risk and that could spin out of control if we wait too long to take action.

At its special Cairo meeting and at the 2001 Arab Summit Conference, the League of Arab States voiced its unswerving support for peace as a strategic option. The Palestinian people is committed to the peace option and to the resumption of negotiations at the point where they left off, on the basis of international legitimacy and recognition of all norms and principles on the basis of which the peace process was founded at Madrid in 1991. In the face of this dilemma, the international community must adopt a non-selective approach. All of us — especially the permanent members of the Security Council — must abide by existing resolutions in order to find a just solution to the Palestinian problem, and must no longer permit the Israeli side to evade its obligations.

At the Cairo and Amman Arab Summit Conferences, President Ben Ali called for protection for the Palestinian people. This was called for also at the recent Genoa meeting of the Group of Eight. In the light of the Israeli Government's policies, protecting the Palestinian people is now imperative. We must send international observers to protect Palestinian civilians, to whom the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, applies. We repeat our demand for a meeting of the High Contracting Parties of that Convention to make the occupying Power, Israel, face up to its obligations vis-à-vis Palestinian civilians.

We should adopt all the important recommendations devised by the Mitchell Committee in Sharm el-Sheikh. They could bring the cycle of violence to an end, put an end to the policy of settlements, and provide protection for the Palestinian people. We must also emphasize the need to set up a monitoring mechanism in order to implement the Mitchell recommendations properly, as well as the recommendations of the G-8 group in order to create a climate favourable to the resumption of negotiations.

The occupation of Orient House and numerous other Palestinian institutions having legal status and subject to the Palestinian Authority is an important and serious setback in the process.

There can be no fair, comprehensive and equitable peace in the region without the creation of a Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital, or without the withdrawal of Israel from the Golan Heights and the occupied Lebanese territories. My delegation underscores the importance for the international community, particularly the Security Council, to take up its responsibilities in order to protect the life and legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and to prevent any further risks in the region that are a threat to peace and security.

Ms. Lee (Singapore): The conflict in the Middle East has entered a dangerous new phase. The cycle of violence has reached alarming levels and appears poised to spiral out of control. The grave situation is a matter of concern to the entire international community and demands the urgent attention of the Security Council.

Singapore deplores in the strongest terms all acts of terror. We are deeply disappointed that the violence and provocative acts have continued unabated and indeed escalated, despite the various mediation efforts, including that of the Secretary-General. Now more than ever, the parties need outside help to climb down from the cycle of violence.

Singapore is prepared to listen to any proposals that help to ease tensions, lead to the cessation of violence and hostilities, bring both parties back to the negotiating table, and ultimately advance the prospects of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

We believe that the report of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-finding Committee, the Mitchell report, represents the best hope in providing the parties with a common framework to take reciprocal steps to ease tensions and cease hostilities. It is comprehensive, fair and objective. More importantly, both parties have embraced its recommendations.

Unfortunately, the glimmer of hope provided by the Mitchell report has waned as violence becomes more entrenched. What is needed is an urgent and renewed effort to kick-start its full and immediate implementation.

Singapore believes that the Security Council should examine what it could do to help implement the Mitchell report. There are already intensive ongoing efforts by key parties, including the United States and regional countries, and the Security Council should support and bolster these efforts. The Council should consider asking the Secretary-General, who was instrumental in convening the Sharm el-Sheikh meeting, to assist in the implementation of the Mitchell report.

For the Security Council to make a real and constructive impact on this volatile situation, we strongly believe that it is important for it to act in a unified manner on this critical issue. The credibility of the Council is at stake. An unequivocal and unified message from the Council would exert the strongest possible influence on the parties involved.

At the end of the day, it is the parties involved that must make their own strategic decision to eschew violence and return to the peace track. There is clearly no alternative to discussing issues of security, borders and statehood except through negotiations on the basis of the principles of non-acquisition of territory by the use of force and of the right of States to live within secure and recognized borders. The further the parties stray, the more these principles would be undermined. The faster we help the two sides implement the Mitchell report, the sooner we can stop the violence and end the senseless loss of life.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): My delegation remains deeply concerned over the escalating violence in the Middle East, which has exacted a high toll of casualties and deaths, mostly among Palestinian civilians. For almost a year now, violence has continued to ravage the occupied Palestinian territories and is becoming more intense. The increasing violence not only shatters the confidence in the peace process, but also compromises the sacrifice, time and energy invested so far in the quest for peace and security in the region.

The extrajudicial killings of Palestinians by the Israeli forces are proceeding at a dangerously accelerated rate. This practice is unacceptable and must be condemned. The situation on the ground today has become alarming and explosive. Hundreds of innocent victims, including children and women from both the Palestinian and Israeli sides, continue to suffer because of the apparent inability and failure by the international community to take the necessary steps to stem the violence. The death toll only continues to rise day after day. Loss of life in any situation is tragic, but when loss of life is avoidable, it becomes immoral.

Prospects for a durable peace in the Middle East have been seriously jeopardized by recent events. If appropriate steps are not taken promptly, there is a high risk that the entire Middle East will be embroiled in a full-scale war. No one wishes this to happen.

We at the Security Council need to assume our responsibilities. Several Council resolutions continue to remain unimplemented, and peace in the Middle East still remains elusive. Today, the eyes of the international community are once more focused on the Security Council, which under the United Nations Charter has the responsibility to intervene and stop the situation from deteriorating any further. The Council has no option but to remain actively engaged and undertake the necessary action to contain the ongoing violence and encourage confidence-building measures between the two parties so that the peace talks may resume.

My delegation urges Israel to put an end to all acts of violence and targeted assassinations. Mauritius strongly condemns the excessive and indiscriminate use of force and violence against the Palestinian people. We also strongly condemn the Israeli occupation of Orient House in East Jerusalem and the closure of other buildings belonging to the Palestinian Authority. Orient House is a symbol of peace and of the very dignity of the Palestinian people; its occupation by Israel is unacceptable. These unwarranted Israeli acts, which are flagrant violations of past agreements signed by the two sides, would further undermine prospects for reviving the peace process and would constitute a deliberate act of provocation. Unless such practices are immediately halted, there will be a further radicalization of the Palestinians. All acts of provocation should stop.

We join our voice to the call made by the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, for Israel to immediately end its occupation of Orient House and other Palestinian buildings. Both Israel and Palestine should exercise the highest degree of restraint and act responsibly in order not to exacerbate the situation any further.

In the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the blockades imposed by Israel have only further worsened the sufferings of the Palestinian people and resulted in untold daily hardship to the residents in the Palestine-controlled areas. The blockade has cost the Palestinian economy millions of dollars; unemployment has soared, and hundreds of thousand of people are struggling for their survival. It goes without saying that unemployment, misery and frustration are breeding grounds for more violent actions. We call upon Israel to immediately remove all the blockades so that the Palestinian people may resume their normal activities.

My delegation is reminded of the remarks made seven years ago by the late Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin, that Israelis and Palestinians are destined to live together on the same soil, in the same land. The establishment of an independent state of Palestine, together with the full implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), are the only safeguards for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace between Israel and Palestine and in the Middle East region. Israel, too, has the right to exist within secure borders.

Since November last year, the Non-Aligned Movement caucus of the Security Council has relentlessly undertaken efforts to move the Council to establish a United Nations observer force to provide protection to the Palestinian people. We are convinced that, had the Council agreed to the deployment of such an observer force, the situation would not be as it is today.

Over the past 23 years, several milestones have been reached in the protracted peace process. Beginning from the Camp David Accords in 1978, we moved to the Madrid Conference, the Oslo peace agreements and the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings of October 2000. Each time we have expressed hope, confidence and expectations that peace will finally be within reach, but each time there has been disappointment. Now we have the Mitchell report, which provides a viable process for a peaceful settlement. We cannot afford to lose this opportunity.

The acceptance of the Mitchell report four months ago by both sides created expectations which, unfortunately, have not been realized. Time has been lost, but no more time should be lost. The report offers a sensible and coherent foundation for resolving the crisis and resuming meaningful negotiations.

Mauritius believes that both sides should look forward to, and promptly consider adopting, the confidence-building measures recommended by the Mitchell report. We appeal to both the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Government to put an end to the cycle of violence and return to the negotiating table. In this regard, we wish to commend all the efforts undertaken so far by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, to narrow down the differences between the Israeli and Palestinian leaders. We encourage the Secretary-General, as well as the leaders of the region and those of the European Union, the United States and the Russian Federation, to pursue their efforts to break the deadlock.

We also endorse the statement made by the Group of Eight in Genoa, Italy, which reaffirmed that the implementation of the Mitchell report was the way forward to break the deadlock, stop the escalation of violence and resume the political process. It is clear that in the case of such an impasse, the international community should provide all possible assistance and avenues to the two sides to stop the violence and resume the peace talks.

My delegation supports the idea of creating a monitoring mechanism that would help the two parties to implement the Mitchell report. This is the only way for us to ensure that the recommendations of the report are respected and implemented. My delegation would support such an initiative, if the matter were to be considered by the Council, and we call upon all members to give serious consideration to this course of action.

Mr. Corr (Ireland): I would like, first, to associate my delegation with the statement to be made later in this debate by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union.

It is a matter of the deepest concern and regret to the Government and the people of Ireland that prospects for a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have receded in recent months; that violence has dangerously escalated; that the excessive and disproportionate use of force is almost daily causing the deaths of innocent civilians; that people are again dying in indiscriminate bombing attacks; and that commitments entered into by the parties, instead of being built upon, are being reversed.

In view of the increasing spiral of violence and of what, at times, seem deliberately provocative acts, as well as the apparent absence of direction in the peace process, it is fully appropriate for the Council once again to address the issue. Furthermore, the Council cannot ignore the fact that long-standing resolutions remain unfulfilled.

When we last spoke in the Council on this issue, on 15 March, Ireland, together with many other delegations, said that the disproportionate use of force by Israel, instead of stabilizing the situation, would merely aggravate it further. We and others also emphasized that attacks on Israeli civilians, in addition to being utterly wrong in themselves, would do nothing to bring about the justice desired and deserved by the Palestinian people, and would in fact put off the day when they can begin to live their lives in freedom and dignity.

It is unfortunate that the warnings given at that time by Security Council delegations — delegations that have the interests of both parties at heart — were not heeded. Violence and provocation have been taken to new levels and the parties are no longer engaged in dialogue. Instead, a corrosive cycle of mutual misunderstanding, ritual condemnation and fear is filling the vacuum left by the ending of substantive dialogue. It is a deeply dangerous and untenable situation.

The present situation is all the more regrettable because, since our last meeting on this issue, the recommendations in the report of the Sharm el-Sheikh fact-finding committee, chaired by Senator George Mitchell, pointed with clarity and imagination to the way forward. On 22 May, the members of the Security Council called on the parties immediately to begin the steps required to implement those recommendations, including those on confidence-building measures.

It is now well past time that the obstacles to the implementation of the recommendations of the Mitchell report were removed. Effective and immediate steps must be taken to bring an end to acts of violence, and the report sets out clearly what is required of the Palestinian Authority in that regard. However, it is not helpful to impose unilateral conditions for the commencement of the implementation of the Mitchell recommendations; that would impose a veto on progress, as those who are bent on wrecking the peace process want.

Neither is it helpful for one party to commit itself only to part of the process. Of course, it is very important for a cessation of violence to be achieved and maintained. However, we made the point in March, and we emphasize it again today, that the current phase of violence arises primarily out of the frustration to which the long years of occupation have given rise. The Mitchell report refers to the humiliation and frustration that Palestinians must endure every day as a result of living with the continuing effects of occupation. In such conditions, without the prospect of a fair and honourable settlement at the end of the process, the calm necessary for the resumption of dialogue is unlikely to be achieved.

The Mitchell report also underlines the difficulties that Israeli settlements in the occupied territories — settlements which the entire international community holds to be illegal — have presented to the peace process. It is long past time that the Israeli authorities unambiguously committed themselves to a freeze on settlement construction activity.

On 9 August, a horrific bomb attack took place in Jerusalem. Other such attacks have taken place, which could have, but fortunately did not, lead to a similar death toll. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland, in condemning that attack, said that the commitments given by the sides to secure a cessation of violence and to implement the recommendations of the Mitchell report must be observed, and he stressed how much there was to be lost by sinking ever deeper into the spiral of attack and retaliation. He said that negotiation towards a comprehensive peace settlement offered the only hope of a way out of the current spiral of violence and the dreadful prospect of a wider conflict in the region.

The Irish authorities are gravely concerned at the closure of Orient House, which has in recent years become a symbol of the Palestinian people's aspirations to sovereignty, and of other institutions in occupied East Jerusalem, as well as at the incursions into territory which under the interim agreements had been transferred to the control of the Palestinian Authority.

We fully understand the depth of feeling that existed in Israel after the horrific suicide bombing attacks. We fully accept that the Israeli authorities have a right and duty to protect the public. However, an action against Palestinian institutions, and against symbols of nationhood important to Palestinians, is an action against a people as a whole, not just against their leadership, and certainly not against terrorists. Such actions do not serve the interests of peace. As the European Union stated, they run counter to the declared objective, which must remain the restoration of security for all.

Also running counter to this objective are the other collective punishments against the Palestinian people: the closures and restrictions on movement, with the resulting devastating impact on the Palestinian people and the Palestinian economy; the withholding of due revenue, resulting in the disastrous financial condition of the Palestinian Authority; and the extrajudicial killings. None of this will bring peace. None of these things will bring one day closer, for Israel, secure borders recognized by its neighbours.

It is becoming increasingly difficult for the public at large, in the region and outside of it, to understand why the international community — which is increasingly ready to intervene quickly and effectively on other issues of international peace and security — is apparently helpless to do anything effective in response to the growing crisis in the Middle East.

In his statement of 9 August, the Foreign Minister of Ireland stated that recent events underlined the urgent need for a third-party monitoring mechanism, which, at this critical time, would serve the interests of both parties.

Ireland also welcomes the statement made by the G-8 on 19 July, which reaffirmed that full implementation of the Mitchell report was the only way forward, outlined the elements necessary for a cooling-off period and said that third-party monitoring accepted by both parties would serve their interests in implementing the report.

Grave psychological barriers exist to a resumption of dialogue. This was clear in March, when Deputy Prime Minister Peres referred to them in stark terms in this Chamber. It is even clearer now. We have made appeals to the parties here today, but the breakthrough that is needed, as in many other conflicts, requires outside mediators that have the trust of both parties. My delegation supports the calls that have been made for the resumption of active and effective mediation.

Is any delegation here ready to declare that the Middle East peace process cannot be revived? An enormous amount has been achieved since the first peace conference was convened in Madrid 10 years ago, and since the Declaration of Principles was signed eight years ago. There have been mistakes and setbacks, and the process has suffered grievously from a lack of continuity. A clear message must go out from this meeting of the Security Council that too much has been achieved and the stakes for both parties and for the region as a whole are too great to throw it all away. My delegation therefore welcomes recent reports of moves by Deputy Prime Minister Peres to reopen dialogue with representatives of the Palestinian Authority.

Building peace in the region is, in the end, about building conditions of justice; about removing threats and affronts to justice; about achieving psychological as well as physical security as preconditions for true peace; about tackling what can only be described as a bondage of fear — in all its aspects — that seems at time to overwhelm wiser judgements and counsels. After 10 months of violence and instability, the message of the Council to both parties must be to offer the full and active support of the international community to help them to turn once again to the only possible way forward: dialogue and peace-building.

Mr. Strømmen (Norway): The conflict in the Middle East can never be resolved by military means. We understand the Israeli desire for security. But the Palestinians too have a right to security and development. The only way for the Israelis and the Palestinians to ensure the security they both want is to embark on the road to peace. This road will be hard and painful, but at the end of the day, there will have to be a solution to the conflict based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Norway condemns terrorism in all its forms. We must not let the actions of extremists dictate the agenda. The perpetrators of violence must be brought to justice in accordance with the law. Any other approach will only be an incitement to further violence. And while violence is being reduced, confidence has to be built.

As a member of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-finding Committee, my minister has worked with the parties and the United States to break the present impasse. We were pleased to note that both the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority endorsed the recommendations in the Mitchell report. However, implementation has been hampered by new acts of violence and the new conditions that have been set.

Norway understands that Israeli leaders do not wish to be perceived as "rewarding terrorism". We also understand that Palestinian leaders do not wish to be perceived as "rewarding occupation". But if the cycle is to be broken, political risks must be taken. Norway urges the leaders in the Middle East to carry out a very hard task in political terms: to lead without knowing how many will follow.

The Committee described the road back to negotiations very clearly. The principal message to the Middle East leaders was that they must end the violence, rebuild confidence and resume negotiations.

Both Israel and the Palestinians must follow up the recommendations of the Mitchell report and implement them as they are. Both parties must also do their utmost to show maximum restraint and de-escalate the situation. In particular, it is important to avoid and rectify all unilateral acts that have a negative impact on agreements previously entered into by the parties.

Norway supports the idea of establishing a third-party presence that can monitor and facilitate the implementation of the Mitchell report recommendations, and Norway calls on the parties to avail themselves of such a mechanism.

Norway also strongly supports the Tenet security arrangements, which aim at securing a comprehensive ceasefire and re-establishing serious cooperation on security issues. However, a ceasefire cannot be sustained unless there is also a political process leading to the resumption of negotiations.

Nine months of violence and recurrent closures have had a very severe impact on the Palestinian economy. In its capacity as chairman of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, Norway has, together with the World Bank and the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories (UNSCO), initiated a study to assess the present situation. The findings of the study will guide the international donor community in its future actions.

The principal task facing the international community today must be to encourage the parties to end the violence, implement the ceasefire and start rebuilding trust. We must stand united in this approach. Agreement within the Security Council is essential.

Mr. Kulyk (Ukraine): The tragic course of events in the Middle East is viewed with deep concern in Ukraine. Particularly disturbing is that the new flare-up of violence in the Palestinian territory and within Israel is resulting in numerous additional victims among the innocent civilian population, and it is increasingly aggravating the situation in the entire region. We were really shocked at the recent series of bloody acts of violence that caused new loss of lives and injuries among Palestinians and Israelis and almost shattered the slim hopes for the resumption of peace negotiations between them. My country deplores and condemns all these acts of violence and expresses condolences to the families of their innocent victims.

On 2 and 9 August 2001, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine released statements in this regard. These statements underline in particular that the entire history of the conflict in the Middle East, as well as the current course of events in the region, proves that the problem cannot be solved by force. There can be no excuse for the excessive use of force or for acts of terrorism, irrespective of their motivations. Violence begets new violence; it brings alienation and animosity to relations between the two sides and makes the prospect for a settlement of the conflict more remote.

Ukraine calls upon both sides to undertake resolute and immediate measures to achieve a ceasefire and stop bloodshed, to prevent a further escalation of violence and create the necessary favourable preconditions for returning to the negotiating table. We believe that the recommendations of the Mitchell Committee constitute a solid basis for finding a way out of the ongoing crisis in the Middle East and for the resumption of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiating process.

The current situation requires that the Israeli and Palestinian leadership act with redoubled prudence, flexibility and realism. It is necessary for them to demonstrate the utmost restraint, political resolve and will to reach mutually acceptable and constructive decisions.

The events of the most recent weeks on the ground are particularly disturbing. The situation is steadily deteriorating, characterized by the ever increasing dynamics of attacks and counter-attacks, growing extremism and hatred. It looks like the vicious circle of mutual violence and vengeance is unbreakable. It is truly regrettable that the United States-assisted ceasefire agreement has not been able to halt the daily bloodshed and shun violence.

It is our firm conviction that the continuous practice of deliberate killings of pre-selected Palestinian individuals and devastating tank raids into the Palestinian-controlled territory should cease.

We also believe that effective control should be exercised over the Palestinian radical elements in order to the stop the practice of suicide bombings and terrorist attacks and reduce incitements and provocations.

We are also convinced that the earliest resumption of effective cooperation between the two parties in the field of security, as well as of their broad contacts at all levels in general, will substantially help in de-escalating the violence and in coming back to the final status talks.

In the current circumstances on the ground, we see merit in the idea of the international monitoring mechanism to assist the parties in implementing the Mitchell Committee recommendations. In our view, it deserves further careful consideration and could contribute to the protection of civilians.

Ukraine remains fully supportive of the individual and joint efforts of the co-sponsors of the Middle East peace process, as well as those of all international players involved in the process of seeking ways to forestall the ongoing regional crisis. My country welcomes the diplomatic efforts made by the European Union to that end. We are also pleased with the active role of the United Nations Secretary-General and his Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process in the current situation, and we encourage them to continue their activities.

For its part, Ukraine is determined to continue its contribution to the cause of achieving general stability in the Middle East and of bringing about a final resolution of the Palestinian question.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I will now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Colombia.

We support this open debate of the Security Council, and we are participating in it in the most constructive spirit and with the sincere hope of contributing to creating conditions that will make possible the end of violence in the Middle East and the resumption of negotiations between the parties as soon as possible. We are also doing this because we have always maintained that the Security Council can and must act when there are threats to international peace and security, in full accordance with the responsibilities attributed to the Council by the Charter.

This is the context in which we would like to raise a few concepts related to the sensitive situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine. Our statements are pervaded by an awareness of the need to exercise the greatest serenity and caution possible, avoiding in all instances aggravation of an already volatile situation.

The situation in the Middle East has fallen into a spiral of violence that is not favourable to anyone. The excessive use of force by Israel, which indiscriminately affects the Palestinian population, as well as the selective assassination of Palestinian individuals, are practices that do not contribute to the cause of peace. Similarly, terrorist attacks attributed to extremist groups that have indiscriminately affected the civil population are also unacceptable.

The occupation of Orient House in Jerusalem and of other buildings of Palestinian institutions in the surrounding area by Israeli forces also deserves international condemnation. It involves facts with significant political meaning that flout previous agreements between the parties and delay confidence-building between them. We call upon the Government of Israel to withdraw from these installations.

The economic situation of the Palestinian people also does not contribute to the creation of favourable conditions for a genuine peace process. We wish to appeal to the international community to help the Palestinian people financially, and to Israel to put an end to the blockades and restrictions that are stifling the precarious Palestinian economy.

It has been reported that the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process has said that more than one third of Palestinians live below the poverty threshold. The same source has categorized the blockade, the worst since those imposed in 1967, as the cause of a shortfall in the Palestinian Authority's finances that reached 22 per cent of its total budget at the end of 2000.

We believe that the recommendations of the Mitchell report of 30 April 2001 are urgent and must be supported and fully implemented, in particular those referring to the cessation of violence, the reaffirmation of the commitments undertaken by the parties to date and the implementation of confidence-building measures to facilitate the resumption of negotiations.

We recognize that the international community has taken various initiatives to bring about these very objectives. Colombia fully supports these efforts and encourages the involved actors of the international community not to desist. But in so doing, we would like to point out our concern about the scarce results produced since the beginning of this phase of the violence in September 2000 in the Middle East.

We believe that the Security Council therefore has a role that must be assumed responsibly to prevent greater polarization between the parties and to contribute to helping them find alternative solutions to the escalating violence. We see the Council's task as an effort that is in accord with and complementary to those carried out by other actors of the international community, including, of course, the actions of the Secretary-General. Therefore, we believe that Council action should essentially be oriented towards full implementation of the Mitchell report recommendations. This document was welcomed by the members of the Council on 22 May 2001. This can be achieved only if we act in unison, protected by the strength provided by solid political consensus among all members.

I now resume my function as President of the Council.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Qatar. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): First, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. I am confident that your wisdom, experience and expertise will lead the work of the Council to the desired success.

My delegation also wishes to avail itself of the opportunity to express its appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Wang Yingfan, the Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China, for the efficient manner in which he managed the work of the Council under his presidency. We also wish to thank you, Mr. President, for holding this important emergency meeting to consider the dangerous and tragic developments unfolding in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem.

The Council is meeting today at one of the most critical stages of the Palestinian people's struggle to regain their fundamental rights in accordance with international legitimacy. That people —men, women and children — are suffering at the hands of the Israeli forces. The time has come for international legitimacy to be respected by all States and Governments, without double standards. Doing so would help to uphold the rule of law and ensure equality and justice without discrimination for all peoples of the world.

What is taking place in the occupied Palestinian territories is a clear and flagrant breach by Israel of the Fourth Geneva Convention with regard to torture, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international human rights legal instruments, including the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. All of these apply to Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967.

The Palestinian people, who demand their legitimate rights to life and national sovereignty, are facing daily confrontations between their young people and one of the best equipped armies of the world — an army that employs heavy tanks, armed personnel carriers and helicopter gunships in a very unbalanced and inhumane manner. The daily raids launched by Israel against Palestinian buildings and institutions and its arrogant and excessive use of force against the unarmed Palestinian people, who have only their souls to defend their homeland with, have made Palestinians more determined to continue their struggle and their uprising against the occupation by Israel that blocks the way towards permanent peace with the Palestinians.

Late on Friday, 10 August 2001, Israeli security forces raided Orient House and other Palestinian properties in and around occupied East Jerusalem. They confiscated important Palestinian archives, including maps and titles to Palestinian properties. Furthermore, the Israeli occupation forces used excessive force to change the status quo of Abu Dis, near East Jerusalem. These actions represent a serious escalation in the bloody military campaign launched by Israel against the Palestinian people since September 2000 — not to mention Israel's military invasion of Jenin with tanks.

In its capacity as the current Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the State of Qatar has, among other things, expressed its condemnation and denunciation of Israel's occupation of Orient House in East Jerusalem. It considers such acts a flagrant breach and serious violation of all the agreements between the Palestinians and the Israelis, a manifestation of the collapse of the peace process and testimony to Israel's violation of all international laws and norms. It has also called on the international community strongly to condemn such acts, and has called on the Security Council and the United Nations to shoulder their responsibilities by taking action to halt such inequitable and unwarranted Israeli practices. This position was announced in an official communiqué of the Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs that was issued as an official document of the Security Council and the General Assembly under the symbol A/55/1027-S/2001/784.

Qatar also made the same official statement on 30 July 2001 to express its condemnation and denunciation of the dangerous Israeli escalation illustrated by the decision of an extremist religious group to lay a cornerstone for an alleged temple at Al-Haram Al-Sharif. That act was regarded as a provocation to religious sentiment and as an effort to violate the sanctity of Islamic Holy Places and the heritage of human civilization. It was also considered an act of wanton aggression against all holy sites. This was an affront to the sentiments of Arab and Muslim peoples throughout the world, an act that fuelled the deterioration of the situation in the region.

In that regard, the State of Qatar has appealed to the international community, and to the Security Council and its permanent members in particular, to shoulder their responsibilities to prevent such provocations. Furthermore, the State of Qatar, in its capacity as the current Chairman of the OIC, has stressed its support for the Palestinian people in its just struggle to regain its land and legitimate rights in accordance with resolutions of international legitimacy and the principle of land for peace. It has also called on Israel to respond to all international initiatives and efforts in the interest of peace, security and stability in the Middle East. That statement was also issued as an official document of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

In that connection, His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, the Emir of the State of Qatar and Chairman of the Ninth Summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, called for an emergency meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Conference. That meeting was held on 26 May 2001 at Doha, Qatar, to discuss the highly dangerous conditions facing the Palestinian people as a result of ongoing escalating Israeli aggression. The meeting heard an important speech by His Highness and held extensive deliberations and negotiations on the content of the declaration of the Ninth Islamic Summit entitled "The Al-Aqsa Uprising: An Uprising for an Independent Palestine".

Concerned about the possibility of a further deterioration in the security situation endangering the entire region, and in an effort to provide protection for the Palestinian people against serious and oppressive Israeli practices, the conference decided to call on the Security Council to hold an emergency meeting to determine the steps necessary to provide international protection to the Palestinians from wanton Israeli aggression and to calm the situation and work towards a resumption of negotiations aimed at a just and comprehensive settlement that ensures a return of peace to the entire Middle East.

The Summit charged His Highness the Emir of Qatar and the follow-up ministerial committee established by him to immediately resume their work by calling for the holding of an emergency meeting of the Security Council to consider the serious situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and to provide the necessary international protection to the Palestinian people and to implement relevant Security Council resolutions on Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The committee was also instructed to be permanently seized of the matter.

Responding to a request submitted by Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabr al-Thani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar and Chairman of the ministerial committee, on the basis of instructions from His Highness the Emir, the Security Council met on 27 November 2000 to examine Israeli actions against the Palestinian people. In a speech to the Security Council, the Foreign Minister of the State of Qatar stressed the urgent need for the international community, and for the Security Council in particular, to take immediate measures to provide international protection for the Palestinian people, to end the ongoing campaign of violence, murder and destruction against them, to ensure the safety and sanctity of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and to enable the Palestinian people to gain their national rights. He emphasized that future peace and prosperity in the Middle East is contingent upon the Council's decision, bearing in mind the responsibility conferred upon it by the conscience of mankind.

In this context, we reiterated in that statement by His Excellency the Foreign Minister the need to provide international protection to the Palestinian people and to condemn the acts of violence committed by the Israeli forces, as well as their excessive use of force, which led to a high number of casualties and extensive damage to property. We call upon Israel, as the occupying Power, to strictly comply with its legally binding responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. We also called for the immediate resumption of peace negotiations in the Middle East, in accordance with the agreements made so far, in order to avoid further deterioration of the situation. We also called for total compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. Otherwise, the authority of the United Nations and its credibility would be severely undermined. We further emphasized that Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) still represented a viable framework for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

In conclusion, we would like to stress that infringing upon religious holy places, in particular Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and other holy sites that have a special place in the hearts of every Muslim, as well as the endeavour to change the legal, demographic, urban, traditional and cultural status of the Holy City constitute an outrageous affront to the sentiments of more than a billion Muslims all over the world. That could be the spark that would burn any hope for peace in the region. Therefore, Al-Quds Al-Sharif is still at the heart of any comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. There can be no peace in the Middle East unless and until the Palestinian people regain their legitimate rights, including the right of having an independent state, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, and in exercising total sovereignty over Al-Haram Al-Sharif of Al-Quds.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Qatar for his statement and his kind words.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Algeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. President. I am particularly pleased to see a diplomat of your talent, your competence and your experience taking over at the head of the Council, whose summer break seems not at all to have lightened our agenda or reduced our responsibilities, from another brilliant diplomat, Ambassador Wang of China, who, through the remarkable manner in which he carried out his term of office, has done credit to the Organization.

Actually, if there were to be one region in the world that would draw the urgent attention of the Security Council in the month of August, it would be the Middle East, where we see under way a tragedy that is fraught with threats and perils, in the face of which the international community would seem once again to be especially powerless and helpless, if not resigned.

From rejection to rejection, from repression to repression, from one crisis to another, frustration has ended up taking hold over hope, and the dynamic for peace, which very recently seemed hopeful, has today been broken for good.

The spirit of Oslo — which had continued to be felt despite the odds and in spite of the accumulated disappointments, backsliding, non-respect for commitments entered into, exactions and brutalities committed against people without defence and assassinations targeting Palestinian militants — has become so frayed these past weeks that it seems surrealistic to continue to talk about a peace process and even more so about its eventual resurrection.

The untold repression against the Palestinian people, which has been besieged with its back to the wall, submitted to all types of intimidation and humiliation, deprived of its freedom of speech and movement, bombarded with shells and rockets and missiles and given over to the deadly madness of tanks and fighter planes and helicopters, has defeated the final hopes for peace and has installed lasting violence, disarray and anguish in the region.

It is in spite of the appeals to moderation and restraint that have increased in recent weeks from all capitals throughout the world, from Moscow to Washington, Brussels to Pretoria, that the Israeli leaders continue, without any second thoughts or remorse, their campaign of terrorism against the Palestinian people, by pillaging their houses and their property, assassinating their children and threatening the Palestinian Authority, which they continue to weaken and destroy while insisting that it continue to contain and suppress the hopes of its people.

No public or private place and no religious or secular site have been spared. The site of the Palestinian Authority in Abu Dis, the police commissariats, the public buildings and private residences, and most recently the Orient House, a highly symbolic place of the Palestinian soul and identity, if there ever was one, have all been targeted, destroyed, closed or occupied by Israeli forces of aggression. Everything today has become a pretext for incursions and aggressions against Palestinian cities, incapable of defending themselves against the onslaught of troops and of tanks and artillery, which each and every time suffocates and stifles them. Actually, a number of these cities and localities are now in a state of siege and might at any time be pillaged or destroyed or occupied in violation of the Oslo agreements and the subsequent agreements signed by the Palestinian Authority, to which Israel, unfortunately, seems to attach as little importance as it does to the reproaches on the part of the international community occasioned by its policy of terror and repression.

The situation as it prevails today in the Middle East is particularly alarming, and, if we are not careful, it might point to an even broader and more dangerous conflagration, that is to say new tragedies and new perils for a part of the world that has already been sorely tried by wars and conflicts that have only given rise to death, destruction and desolation.

The logic of confrontation can still, however, be reversed. It would only require that the international community, that is the Security Council, which the Charter has entrusted with the responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, decide finally to act promptly, firmly and with determination as required by the seriousness of the situation.

It should, first of all, call for the full and urgent implementation of the recommendations of the Mitchell report, whose relevance the international community as a whole has praised and whose validity it has emphasized, and for the strict observance of a ceasefire, which is the key to the rapid establishment of impartial surveillance machinery.

It should then send as soon as possible international observers with a view to supervising to the effective respect of the ceasefire and ensuring the protection and security that the Palestinian civilian population needs.

It must also require that the Orient House and the offices of the Palestinian Authority be restored without delay and without conditions to their legitimate owners and that an end be put to aggression, incursions and punitive expeditions against Palestinian cities and communities.

It must then also finally see to it that Israel scrupulously and fully comply with the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

Moreover, greater involvement on the part of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who enjoys the esteem and confidence of the parties involved, might be useful and timely and help to reduce violence and tension in the region, and Algeria can only encourage that most earnestly.

This is what this Council must accomplish so that the entire region will not fall into violence. A final settlement to the Palestinian issue can, however, only be reached through the respect for international legitimacy and the principle of land for peace, solemnly agreed to in Madrid, and consequently through the restoration of the Palestinian people's national legitimate rights, including its right to the creation of its own independent State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

The Security Council must act, and act quickly. That is its role and its responsibility. The Council's credibility depends on this, as does the future of a region that, during this dangerous summer as never before, finds itself at a crossroads.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Algeria for the kind words he addressed to the presidency.

Some 30 speakers remain to be heard. In view of the lateness of the hour, and with the agreement of the Council, I shall now suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.20 p.m.

United Nations
S/PV.4357 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

Provisional

4357th meeting

Monday, 20 August 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Valdivieso	(Colombia)
Members:	Bangladesh	Mr. Ahsan
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Jamaica	Mr. Ward
	Mali	Mr. Issouf Oumar Maiga
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Norway	Mr. Strømmen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Singapore	Ms. Lee
	Tunisia	Mr. Jerandi
	Ukraine	Mr. Kulyk
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Letter dated 15 August 2001 from the Representatives of Mali and Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2001/797)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

01-51566 (E)

The meeting was resumed at 3.15 p.m.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Cuba, Cyprus, Lebanon and Namibia in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba), Mr. Kasoulides (Cyprus), Mr. Tadmoury (Lebanon) and Mr. Andjaba (Namibia) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 20 August 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request the Security Council to extend an invitation, under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure, to Mr. Ali A. Abbas, Deputy Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations, to participate in the meeting of the Security Council to be held on Monday, 20 August 2001, on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem."

This letter will be issued as a document of the Security Council under symbol S/2001/801.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation, under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure, to Mr. Abbas.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Jordan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Goussous (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to thank you very much, Mr. President, for convening this emergency meeting at the request of the States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. I should also like to congratulate you wholeheartedly on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. I am profoundly convinced that, thanks to your experience and skill, the work of the Council will be successful.

I should also like to thank your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Wang Yingfan, for having conducted the business of the Council with such brilliance during the course of the previous month.

My country, Jordan, greatly appreciates the laudable efforts by the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. We thank him for his wise guidance and for always trying to seek to implement the purposes and principles of the United Nations. We thank him for the tireless efforts he has made in the service of international peace and security.

My delegation is highly concerned about the serious developments in the occupied Palestinian territories resulting from continued acts of aggression by Israel against the Palestinian people. These acts are now posing a very grave threat. My delegation condemns Israel for waging an increasing military campaign against the Palestinian people, for using collective punishment against the Palestinians and for using combat aircraft and tanks to destroy Palestinian villages and institutions. This has led to a high number of casualties among innocent civilians. The policy of assassination that is under way, the demolition of houses and the economic and security siege of Palestine towns and villages are flagrant violations of international agreements and of relevant international laws and norms.

We once again condemn the Israeli policy and Israel's invasion and occupation of areas that are under full Palestinian authority. The two sides had agreed to consider the issue of Jerusalem during the final-status negotiations. The occupation of houses is a flagrant violation of international law and of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, inter alia, 252 (1969) and 672 (1990), which consider Israel's occupation and annexation of Jerusalem null and void.

Jordan firmly believes that the policy being pursued by the Israeli Government cannot provide security to the Israeli people. On the contrary, this policy will lead to more violence and to more victims. Rather than leading to regional peace and security, it will threaten the future of the peace process. The regrettable recent attack in Jerusalem that caused many victims, including civilians, shows that security measures, however robust, cannot deter extremist groups from committing acts of aggression. Therefore, the only way to provide security is to deal with the problems facing the fact that the peace process and to resume negotiations between the Palestinian and the Israeli sides.

We are fully aware of the fact that the military option is not a solution to the crisis and that to deal with this crisis only from a security point of view will not resolve it and will only increase violence. This could ignite the entire region. Therefore Jordan believes that a political solution is the only way to resolve the crisis.

In this context, we appeal to the Israeli Government to respond favourably to international efforts to put an end to the acts of aggression and siege against the Palestinians. We encourage the Israeli Government to return to the negotiating table on the basis of the agreements that provided the foundations for the peace process.

We believe that the report of the Mitchell Fact-Finding Committee and the recommendations contained in it provide a way to resolve this crisis, to restore trust between the two parties through the implementation of all the commitments undertaken and by resuming negotiations where they were left off. The objective here is to reach a final agreement, put an end to occupation, restore rights and enable all to live in peace and security in accordance with the international resolutions that form the basis for the peace process.

My delegation once again reiterates its appeal to the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities under the Charter by sending international observers to the occupied Palestinian territories, in accordance with the recommendations of the G-8 in Genoa, Italy, and the recommendations of the Mitchell Committee. The objective here is to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people in accordance with the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

We also appeal to the Security Council to urge Israel to implement international resolutions, in particular resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which formed the basis for the peace process. Israel should also be urged to recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to create their own independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital.

In conclusion, my delegation reaffirms the solidarity of our King, our Government and our people with the Palestinian people. We want to see to it that the Palestinian people enjoy their legitimate rights, and that they meet all their legitimate demands to create an independent State comprising all of their national territory, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker is the representative of the Sudan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is a pleasure for me to speak today on behalf of the Group of Arab States, which is headed by the Sudan this month, and to convey to you, Sir, our congratulations on your succession to the presidency of the Security Council. I would like once again to convey my congratulations to the Chinese delegation for the masterful way in which it conducted the Council's deliberations last month.

Barely a few months have elapsed since the Security Council last met to review the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. Since that time the situation has worsened in a most disturbing manner. We had hoped that the international community represented in the Security Council would have been able to halt the organized murder of Palestinians by Israel by providing urgent, international protection from the war crimes being committed against civilians as part of an official Israeli policy. However, the Security Council has stood idly by while television screens around the world showed us the spectacle of an occupying Power persisting in using military force and perpetrating systematic acts of killing against innocent, defenceless civilians.

The Israelis have increased the isolation of Palestinian towns and villages by besieging them with tanks and heavy war machinery. The occupying Power has used combat aircraft against defenceless Palestinian people. In an unequal battle it has destroyed their institutions and infrastructure, as well as the premises of the Palestinian Authority. The latest expression of Israeli aggression and brutal force was the occupation of Orient House, in contravention of all previously signed agreements and commitments.

The Security Council has not succeeded in the past in adopting a draft resolution that might provide protection to the Palestinian people against the daily aggression to which it is subjected, just as it has not succeeded in halting the deterioration of the situation in the region, as called for by its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. This Council is invested with a special responsibility to deter Israel, which has exceeded all possible limits in its aggression. Israel has assumed the right to defy the resolutions of the international community and the Security Council and the rules of international law, in particular humanitarian law, and the Fourth Geneva Conventions relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

Accordingly, the United Nations is now faced with a major responsibility and challenge, particularly this Council, which must prove itself equal to the responsibilities incumbent on it. It must adopt immediate and urgent measures to bring an end to this violence that targets innocent, defenceless Palestinian civilians and provide them with the necessary protection.

Should the Council fail in its duty — the duty to provide protection to innocent civilians in Palestine from daily Israeli arbitrary measures — it will have failed in the duty assigned to it by the Charter. It is high time that Israel understand that violence cannot bring it the security that it desires. That security and peace cannot be achieved as long as its expansionist policy continues, a policy based on repression, aggression and the Judaization of Jerusalem.

The only way to peace in the Middle East necessarily means an end to Israeli occupation and a firm commitment by Israel to implement the resolutions of the international community and the Security Council, in particular resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), so as to enable the Palestinian people to establish its independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital.

Israel's persistence in conducting its bloody campaign against the Palestinian people will lead to an explosion of the situation in the entire region; an explosion with unforeseeable consequences that could very well threaten international peace and security, as well as the interests of all parties in the region. That is why the Arab Group calls upon the Security Council to act quickly and urgently to protect the Palestinian people. It is no longer possible to wait and allow the situation to deteriorate further. The Arab States wish to express their unfailing support to the Palestinian people, who are faced with day-to-day arbitrary acts on the part of the occupation forces. We hail the legitimate fight of the Palestinian people, who are struggling to achieve self-determination — a legitimate right recognized by international law, the United Nations Charter and the Declaration of Human Rights. The Palestinian people are not alone in their fight against Israeli policy. The Arab nation as a whole stands by their side.

In conclusion, the Arab States call upon the Security Council and the States sponsoring the peace process in the Middle East, as well as the European Union, to act as quickly as possible in order to halt the horrible deterioration of the situation in the region due to Israel's policy of aggression. Israel must be brought to respect international law, the international community and the resolutions of this Council and to halt its daily aggression against the Palestinian people.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Sudan for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Saudi Arabia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your presiding over the Security Council this month. I am confident that, with your well-known experience and wisdom, you will lead the work of the Council to the ends that we all desire. Allow me also to express my thanks and appreciation to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of China, for his excellent leadership of the Council last month.

The Security Council is meeting once more to discuss the deteriorating and dangerous situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. This comes as a result of the continuation of the bloody and unjust military campaign of the Israeli military forces against the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem; a campaign that is spreading terror and fear among the unarmed population and that is increasing the pain and agony of the Palestinian people, who are experiencing punitive and inhumane actions and violations of their human rights. A few months ago, hundreds were killed, thousands were wounded, property was demolished, infrastructure was destroyed, farms were destroyed and the Palestinian economy has been damaged in order to make the Palestinians submit.

It would have been possible to save the people who were killed during the Israeli occupation. It would have been possible to save the victims and those wounded as a result of Israeli aggression. It would have been possible to put an end to the demolition and the violation of human rights. It would have been possible to put an end to violence and to calm the situation, if the Security Council had assumed its responsibilities and had maintained peace and security, which is its primary responsibility, and indeed the raison d'être of the United Nations.

A country that assassinates a people, usurps land, chases children, besieges the elderly, quashes values and violates rights is a State that is fond of terrorism and practises it. Yet, the Security Council is watching helplessly, instead of confronting the aggression, while others in the international community try to find illogical justification for the Israeli aggression. Principles of international legitimacy are ignored. Human rights are discarded, and the right to self-determination and all norms and laws attached to it are swept under the carpet.

The fact that the Security Council did not take necessary and effective measures to end Israel's transgressions and efforts to starve the Palestinian people and render it homeless, or to protect its legitimate rights, has increased that country's determination to pursue a policy of terrorism against the Palestinian people. The Palestinian people therefore believe that Israel is the only country that, with enormous and rather strange daring, does not recognize human rights and in fact disdains moral principles and disregards international public opinion. They also believe that the current Israeli Government's official course of action includes kidnapping, assassination, eroding the authority of the Palestinian Authority and eliminating its leaders and demolishing houses.

It is indeed regrettable that the Security Council continues to be a spectator while the forces of the Israeli occupation pursue their daily acts of aggression and indulge their addiction to violating human rights and to perpetrating crimes against the unarmed people of Palestine. Does not the Council see in the policies and practices of the Israeli occupation forces a need to apply international law? Does it not see in the violation of the rights of Palestinian human beings a need to intervene or call for the application of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War? Does the Council not see in the bloodshed and the growing number of demolitions a reason to intervene to preserve peace and security? Do not the aerial bombardment, artillery shelling, demolitions and burning undertaken by Israeli occupation forces give the Council reason to be concerned and, therefore, reason to involve itself?

The serious developments taking place in the area call for the Security Council to stop being a neutral party and to take measures that can put an end to Israel's aggression and to the way it deals with the Palestinians. It is unacceptable and irrational to have neutrality between the aggressor and the aggressed. How can there be neutrality between a murderer and his victim? How can there be neutrality between the occupier and those who are defending their rights and calling for their independence?

Israel's ongoing aggression against Palestinians and their territory is indeed a result of the fact that the international community does not want to interfere. This is reflected in the inability of the Council to take effective measures to end the inhumane acts and practices that the Israeli occupying forces are pursuing. That inability has given Israel some cover in its attempt to alter the balance of power in the region and to create new colonial facts on the ground before resuming negotiations on a final settlement. Israel has realized that the timing of the final settlement does not suit it and that the road to peace and settlement will not help it achieve its expansionist goals.

The policy of murder and assassination being pursued by Israel only confirms the terrorist nature of the current Israeli Government. It also proves that Israel does not take seriously the lives and rights of human beings and that it is violating international law and international humanitarian law. Those who commit such crimes must be held responsible. They should be tried for the crimes they have committed against humanity. Any reluctance to do so will only lead to more crimes.

The occupation of Orient House is a clear and flagrant violation of the Oslo agreements, by which

Israel undertook never to attack Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem. Moreover, excessive Israeli measures, founded on a policy of brute force, will have very negative and destructive results. They will not lead to peace or security; they will only serve to take the situation into chaos and destruction.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia condemns these arbitrary and inhumane actions and holds Israel responsible for the consequences of its actions and policies. It strongly condemns the serious escalation of violence against the Palestinian people by the aggressive Israeli forces. We also condemn the air raids against civilian residences using every sort of heavy weapon, and the assassination of Palestinians. All these inhumane tactics are contrary to civilized behaviour. They constitute a violation of all the relevant international instruments aimed at bringing about peace.

In that context, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia appeals to all peace-loving countries to do all they can to end the aggression and transgressions against the people of Palestine. That would contribute to bringing about peace, security and justice. It will also avoid double standards. We look forward to the Council's assumption of its international responsibilities and its role, as well as its taking a firm stand against this inhumane aggression by Israel and its marginalization of all international treaties and agreements.

It is quite clear that the violence taking place in the occupied Palestinian territories is the result of the hopelessness and frustration born out of decades of occupation and the inhumane practices of the occupying Power, foremost among which are the building and expansion of Israeli settlements, the lack of any Israeli will to fulfil its commitments and the procrastination of that State to implement the agreements it has entered into. It is quite clear to the Security Council and to the international community at large that the genocide that Israel is perpetrating against the Palestinian people through its brutal forces and numerous actions is intended to uproot all the hopes of the Palestinians. Although genocide cannot be quantified, it is nevertheless quite clear in Israel's policies of assassination, destruction and burning. It is also quite clear that Israel is seeking to enslave the Palestinian people and deprive them of their legitimate rights to a decent life.

Policies of collective punishment — the closure of roads, checkpoints, land confiscation, restricting the movement of Palestinians, depriving them of work, subjecting them to starvation — and the effects of all this on the Palestinian economy and the growing number of acts of terrorism and assassinations that the Israeli authorities are pursuing emphasize the international character of the problem and, therefore, the responsibility of the Security Council towards that problem. The Council is morally, politically and legally responsible for the Palestinian people, who are seeking to exercise their inalienable rights. It is incumbent upon the Council to continue assuming its responsibility towards the Palestinian question until a satisfactory solution is found, in conformity with the relevant Security Council resolutions and international law and until the rights of the Palestinian people are fully realized.

The Security Council for a long time has laid the necessary basis for solving the problem of the Palestinian question in its resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). If the Council has given up dealing with the Palestinian problem and left the issue to the two parties with the assistance of the mediators and the Madrid principles to push forward the peace process and to realize a final settlement, the Council must, after the deterioration of the situation, intervene and seek to restore peace and security to the occupied Palestinian territories. Among the Council's responsibilities is the preservation of international peace and security.

The peace process has witnessed difficulties and challenges before. However, the standstill that it is facing now and the serious deterioration of the situation may lead to very serious and grave international consequences. This makes it essential for the Security Council to reconsider the issue in depth and seek the help of the parties to settle the problem and to send an observer mission, which will help to de-escalate the situation, stop the violence, and to resume dialogue and negotiations.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Saudi Arabia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Djibouti. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti): I wish to congratulate you most warmly, Mr. President, at the outset, for assuming the presidency of the Council for this month, in which you have already displayed your diplomatic and political acumen. May I also extend our gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Wang Yingfan of China, for his effective leadership last month.

Against the background of repeated broken promises, failure to honour previous agreements and a litany of assurances unfulfilled, the situation in the Middle East is crying out for urgent help as it inches towards a conflagration, with both the Palestinians and the Israelis displaying mounting resolve to make the sacrifices necessary in the effort to break each other's will. All forms of contacts have ceased, and relations between the Palestinians and Israel, the occupying Power, are almost non-existent. If there is any contact at all, it is through the barrel of the gun. What a dreadful scenario, and what an alternative to the joy, warm handshakes and the high hopes pinned on the Oslo Declaration of Principles, of 1993, and on the so many subsequent negotiations, however protracted and less fruitful than they might have been.

What we are witnessing today is a war of attrition, which may grow into a regional war unless there is an immediate intervention by the international community. The Security Council cannot continue to stay on the sidelines. The continuous brutal acts of aggression by Israel — entering and attacking Palestinian-controlled areas in gross violation of agreements reached; targeting and destroying police headquarters, police stations, government facilities and infrastructures; and occupying the very symbols of Palestinian nationhood — all indicate to us the determination of the occupying Power to paralyse Palestinian institutions and their Authority in order to create a security vacuum.

The insistence by Israel on a ceasefire from the Palestinians while offering nothing in return — tangible or intangible — makes a mockery of its desire for security and peace. The overwhelming, brazen show of power by Israel simply highlights the glaring disparity of the forces. On one side, we have a nuclear power with the latest cutting-edge technology in air power, missiles, tanks, a superb navy and state-of-the-art intelligence. On the other side, we have young stone-throwers and men with basic weapons — with no armour, no artillery, no navy or any air defences.

Obviously, this large-scale military campaign by Israel is intended to coerce the Palestinians into submission and into accepting impossible conditions, or else face prolonged siege, expulsions or even the crippling of the Palestinian Authority. Anything is possible under the current climate. Such a policy is at best counterproductive, and at worst simply misguided, fuelling sentiments of distrust, hatred, despair and anger.

Relying on repressive measures alone — brutality, collective punishment, assassinations, demolitions and denial, and including unrealistic demands — cannot bring enhanced security to Israel. It has the right to security and to live in peace. Unfortunately, Israel has trapped itself in a vicious cycle of violence, leaving no room for diplomacy. This is a grave political blunder that requires serious rethinking.

The economic effects of the Israeli blockade, now almost a year old, in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip are alarming, with rising unemployment and falling incomes as people grapple with perhaps the most severe movement restrictions imposed on the Palestinian population and territory since 1967, according to a United Nations study just released. The restrictions on movement in and out of Palestinian areas and between towns and villages are having dire consequences on all economic activities and on the livelihood of the people.

The self-sustaining claim that Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East is fast becoming a myth. For it is inconceivable that a nation that professes to respect universal values and norms is the one that at the same time pursues, as a matter of policy, cruel and discriminatory practices against the Palestinians, administering the notions of democracy and human rights as they relate to Palestinians as an option and not as an inalienable right as we know it. The lack, therefore, of any legal or moral basis for the continued colonization of the Palestinian people in this age and era, coupled with the phenomenal growth in illegal settlements, place Israel outside the self-proclaimed democratic and ethical norms at the centre of its foundation and continued existence. Israel cannot have one set of democratic principles and human rights standards for its own citizens and none at all extended to the Palestinian population under its occupation. It is a charade, to say the least.

We condemn all acts of violence and killings directed against innocent civilian populations on both sides. As we all know, our attention is directed to the ever worsening situation through the day-to-day reports. We tend to focus on the disturbing accounts of the moment, often forgetting that this is yet one more side effect of a lingering, pervasive and much larger problem, namely, occupation — perhaps one of the longest, if not the longest, foreign occupation of a people in modern history.

Israel's 34-year-old occupation of Palestinian territory has long been condemned by the international community and by the Security Council as illegal and as a serious obstruction to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. In total disregard of repeated international demands, however, Israel has been vigorously pursuing the policy of extensive illegal settlements throughout the occupied territories. Those territories are today punctuated by Jewish settlements. The territory has been balkanized into about five dozen "bantustans" completely encircled by Israel. They are separated, with no territorial contiguity, no borders and no airspace. And travel between one bantustan and another is through Israeli checkpoints. The question is whether Israel will ever contemplate dismantling and relinquishing the illegal settlements to pave the way for a lasting peace with the Palestinians?

As one would expect, the current Prime Minister of Israel, in an interview last April, ruled out the removal of Jewish settlements, claiming that they provided "essential strategic depth to protect Israel's existence". And, in another interview in the same month, he said he was "willing to accept the establishment of a Palestinian State on 42 per cent of the West Bank".

So, in the context of that grim prospect, coupled with the failure of the peace process and the siege making life intolerable, the current widespread unrest was not unexpected. Now an escalation of rage and bitterness reigns. The more Israel employs the excessive power of repression, destruction and incursion, the more radical the Palestinian response becomes. There is no immediate end in sight under this scenario. And there is no alternative except mutually assured destruction.

Against the backdrop of such an explosive situation, the Council needs to be proactive and, in accordance with its mandate under the Charter and with relevant resolutions, to take steps necessary to de-escalate the violence that has already claimed hundreds of lives and has caused thousands of casualties and senseless destruction. Among the immediate measures that are deemed urgent are: to call for an immediate cessation of hostilities, including provocation, assassination and destruction, and for the lifting of the siege; to demand that Israel relinquish Orient House and the other Palestinian offices in and around Jerusalem; to urge the urgent resumption of the peace talks; to approve a monitoring mechanism to oversee the implementation of the proposals set out in the Mitchell Committee's report; and to demand that Israel relieve the economic pressure inflicted upon the Palestinian people, including releasing the hundreds of millions of dollars in tax money owed to the Palestinian Authority.

Finally, the Council is called upon to heed and to exercise its Charter responsibility by ending the occupation which is the root cause of the persistent mayhem and suffering. It must also commit itself to restoring dignity, respect and sovereignty to the Palestinian people. Like all other peoples everywhere, they have the right to live in peace and to have a secure existence.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Djibouti for the kind words he addressed to the presidency.

The next speaker is the representative of South Africa. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Maitland (South Africa): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. On behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to you for convening this important discussion in the Security Council. The situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, has deteriorated so dramatically since the last open debate that it has become essential for the Council, as custodian of international peace and security, to reassess its efforts to bring peace to that region.

The occupation of Orient House and other symbols of Palestinian national identity constitutes a flagrant violation of the formal commitments made by Israel in the context of the Oslo process. The Israeli guarantee to respect the inviolability of official Palestinian institutions was one of the fundamental building blocks of the ensuing peace process. Israel's recent provocative actions threaten the very basis on which the parties have pursued their search for peace over the past eight years.

The Non-Aligned Movement once again confirms that the Palestinian question remains the permanent responsibility of the United Nations until it is effectively resolved in all its aspects. It is the Security Council's duty to ensure that the Palestinian flag flies once again over East Jerusalem.

The Non-Aligned Movement has repeatedly drawn the Council's attention to the dangerously high levels of frustration and violence that are being fomented by Israel's policies of closures, blockades and restrictions on the movement of people, goods and resources. Palestinian civilians are still being prevented from reaching their places of work and worship, and the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate because essential supplies and funds for basic services are being withheld. As members of this Council well know, the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, expressly prohibits the collective punishment of a civilian population.

The Non-Aligned Movement once more reiterates its call on Israel to respect international humanitarian law and to cease its acts of military aggression against the civilian population of Palestine. Security Council resolution 1322 (2000) calls on Israel to abide scrupulously by its legal obligations with respect to the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. The present situation necessitates the reconvening of the Conference of the High Contracting Parties on measures to enforce the Convention in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, as called for at the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly.

The Non-Aligned Movement has long affirmed that the question of Palestine constitutes the core of the Middle East conflict. The attainment of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital is pivotal to the achievement of a sustainable and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The principle of land for peace, as articulated in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), remains valid today.

The Movement believes that peaceful negotiation is the only means of ensuring lasting peace, security and stability in the region. We urge the parties to take the required steps to ensure the cessation of hostilities, to restore calm and to adopt measures to re-establish mutual trust.

The framework for the resumption of negotiations between Israel and Palestine already exists in the form of the Egyptian-Jordanian proposals, the recommendations of the Mitchell report and the understandings regarding a ceasefire facilitated by the United States. What is lacking is a credible multinational presence on the ground to monitor any ceasefire that may be called by the parties and to serve as a visible symbol of the international community's concern for the safety and human rights of the peoples of Palestine and of Israel.

The Security Council must demonstrate its commitment to upholding international peace and security by acting expeditiously to set up a credible multinational monitoring mechanism to verify the implementation of agreements. The fate of the people of Palestine and Israel can no longer be left in the hands of extremists on both sides.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nejad-Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to extend, Sir, my congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. We have full confidence that under your wise guidance, the Council will make progress in dealing with the issues on its agenda. I should also like to thank you for convening this important and timely meeting of the Security Council at this critical time for the Palestinian people.

I would like to express the grave concern of the Iranian people and Government over a further escalation by the Israeli regime in its inhumane practice of repression against the Palestinian people. The Israeli regime, in pursuit of its bloody campaign and racist and aggressive policy against the defenceless Palestinians, is employing more vicious measures. The assault against and seizure of Orient House, along with other Palestinian offices in the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif is in line with the iniquitous Israeli policy of negating the Palestinian national rights and distorting the Islamic character of the city. As such, it pertains directly to the sensitive issue of the status of Al-Quds

Al-Sharif and must be addressed by the international community, including the Islamic world.

The Israeli campaign of extrajudicial killings of Palestinians on the basis of hit lists is a flagrant violation of key tenets of natural justice and of provisions of international humanitarian law. The deeds and words of Israeli leadership now make it obvious that extrajudicial executions have become part of the regime's policy. This amounts to organized acts of terrorism by a Government, and the international community should not turn a blind eye to it.

Moreover, the incursions by heavily armed Israeli forces into Palestinian areas constitute yet another heavy-handed criminal act carried out by a Government armed to the teeth against a defenceless population. The destruction and the loss of Palestinian lives that follow such incursions further exacerbate the plight of Palestinians and add to instability in the whole region.

The criminal acts perpetrated by the Israeli regime further expose its true nature and negate the Israeli pretence of peaceful intentions or a desire for pacific coexistence with Muslims and Christians in the region. Israel's repeated crimes and heavy-handed approach run counter to all its high-sounding and empty claims of seeking peace. This regime is the principal cause of the tension and instability in the region.

Occupation lies at the very origin of the Palestinian conflict and overall tension and instability in the Middle East. The shocking developments over the past few months have made it more obvious that unless the principal cause of conflict is effectively addressed, the crisis could never subside. As to the real intention of the Israeli regime, it is significant that Israelis continue to reject the call for a freeze on all settlement construction activities in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Not surprisingly, they continued with their Jewish settlement activity in the 1990s, which contravenes not only the norms and principles of international law but even flouts the letter and spirit of the agreements they signed with Palestinians. The significant increase in the population and areas under unlawful Jewish settlement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip over the past eight years attests to the fact that Israelis have never been serious about the so-called principle of land for peace. In other words, it is significant that they continue to colonize the territory from which they have been ostensibly negotiating to withdraw.

There should be no doubt about the fact that the continued occupation with no end in sight led to disillusionment and, consequently, to the ongoing Palestinian uprising. Therefore, without putting an end to the Zionist policy of occupying others' territories, the crisis in the Middle East cannot be brought to an end. As all peoples are endowed with the right to resist foreign occupation, the same right should also be fully recognized for the Palestinian people, and the international community should take appropriate actions in this direction.

In the face of more repressive and arbitrary measures adopted by Israelis and their open contempt for the will of the international community embodied in resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, we believe that now, more than ever, the Council needs to meet its responsibility and take the necessary actions to redress the situation in occupied Palestine, thus averting unforeseen and incalculable consequences that may induce the entire area to devastation and bloodshed.

Recent events have further demonstrated the need for international intervention, protection and an observer force to be established by the Council with a view to protecting defenceless Palestinian civilians from ever-increasing atrocities at the hands of Israelis. The veto last December of a draft resolution to authorize the establishment of a United Nations observer force proved to be a disservice to the volatile situation in the area. The presence of such a force on the ground could have forestalled more violence and more bloodshed and saved so many precious lives.

Moreover, it is imperative that the heavy-handed approach by the Israeli army, such as targeted assassinations, armed incursions, collective punishment, including tightening blockades and the closure of Palestinian areas, and the resort to heavy weapons against Palestinians, which amounts to war crimes, cannot go with impunity. In this respect, I would like to echo the appeal by the leaders of States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference at the 9th Islamic Summit held last November in Doha, calling on the Security Council to set up an international commission of inquiry to investigate the massacres perpetrated by Israel, and to constitute an international criminal tribunal in conformity with international law in order to prosecute the Israeli war criminals who have perpetrated those savage massacres.

Furthermore, outrageous scenes, carried by the media to the living rooms of people across the globe, in which tanks, armoured carriers and helicopter gunships engage stone-throwers in the occupied territories, indicate that the time is ripe for the international community to contemplate the possibility of denying the occupying Power access to sources of armaments and military equipment.

Never, throughout history, has a colonial Power been able to terrorize a people into submission forever. Here, the fundamental question is whether or not the international community, represented by this Council, can fulfil its responsibility of limiting the extent of Palestinian blood and life lost and homelessness and agony imposed before the occupiers and aggressors are tamed and the fundamental rights of Palestinians to self-determination in their own land are realized.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Pakistan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): We are always encouraged, Mr. President, to see your great country at the forefront of international efforts to support the cause of peace and security, whether in Palestine or elsewhere in the world. Speaking personally, I should like to say that it is always good to see you taking your job very seriously — you are presiding over this meeting with a very constructive approach — reflecting the commitment of your country to facilitating the resolution of problems such as that of Palestine.

I should also like to avail myself of this opportunity to compliment Ambassador Wang Yingfan of the People's Republic of China for providing very effective and constructive stewardship of the Council during the preceding month.

It has been five months since we last discussed the situation in Palestine in a public meeting in this Chamber. It has been twice that long since this body passed a resolution on the matter before us. During that period, we have seen the situation in the occupied territories deteriorate day by day. The already alarming conditions on the ground have become explosive. Violence has escalated with the intensification of coercive measures against the Palestinian people.

The international community is rapidly running out of time and options. This meeting comes at an appropriate moment. But the question is: What do we expect from this meeting? Where do we go from here? Would another resolution make any difference? Has the Security Council implemented its earlier resolutions? What is the fate of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973)? Is the Council ready to genuinely play the role assigned to it by the Charter?

As we seek answers to these questions, there is no end to the tragedy in Palestine. Many innocent lives have been lost in the past 15 days alone. The symbols of Palestinian sovereignty and nationhood have been blatantly violated and seized. In stark disregard of all humanitarian and legal norms, further targeted assassinations have been threatened. These methods are, indeed, typical of all those situations where a people living under foreign occupation are not only denied their inalienable rights but also subjected to repression and coercion through military force. While provocation and repressive tactics multiply, any attempt at resistance is branded as terrorism.

When oppressed people struggle for their rights, an effort is made to describe their just struggle as terrorism — that is a story that we have heard before. But when occupying States use massive force and violence to deny a people their inalienable rights and indulge in State terrorism, the world watches silently. What other name could be given to the repression of the peoples living under foreign occupation? How can we deny the legitimacy and glory of subjugated people's struggles for freedom and against injustice?

We are all aware that the fire in Palestine has the potential to engulf the whole region. The psychological impact of violent coercion is even more far-reaching, and freedom struggles have shown that oppression only strengthens the resolve of the oppressed. History has taught us that peace cannot be established through subjugation. It can be achieved only through the realization of the legitimate, inalienable right of self-determination. No attempt can crush the will of a people, whether in Palestine or elsewhere, struggling in such conditions against occupation and repression.

The volatile situation in Palestine warrants urgent measures. The international community must take immediate steps not only to facilitate resumption of the peace process but also to bring an immediate end to the violence, heavy-handedness and coercion in the occupied territories. Such provocative measures constitute serious breaches of the Oslo peace accord. They are also contrary to the assurances given to the brokers of Middle East peace in 1993 not to hamper the activities of the Palestinian institutions.

A durable peace cannot be established by binding a weaker party to agreements while allowing the stronger one a free hand. The disproportionate use of force against the Palestinian people and the unabated settlement activities undermine the prospects of peace. The present situation in Palestine demands active intervention on the part of the international community to reverse this dangerous trend and oversee the implementation of the commitments made and agreements signed.

As in the case of other people under foreign occupation, Pakistan has been a firm supporter of the just struggle of the Palestinian people for their inalienable rights. We reaffirm our solidarity with them. We respect and honour their wishes, reflected in the draft resolution presented to this Council. We support the full implementation of the recommendations of the Mitchell report. The Security Council could also deploy a United Nations protection observer force in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. Such a measure would help to cool down the situation and facilitate the resumption of the peace process. The international community must also ensure full respect for the Fourth Geneva Convention with regard to the occupied territories.

The status of Al-Quds Al-Sharif remains central to any comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. No lasting peace in the region will be possible without the realization of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. These include their right to establish their independent State with Jerusalem as its capital and the exercise of full sovereignty over Al-Haram Al-Sharif.

This time last year, you will recall, Sir, we stood close to realizing the dream of peace in the Middle East. Although the peace process has been derailed, we must not lose hope or the will to put it back on track. What is required is political will rather than political expediency, complete rather than selective implementation of Security Council resolutions and decisions, and concerted action rather than empty debate.

We have seen the end of one century and the beginning of another. Unfortunately, some of the chapters of the last century that were written in the blood of innocent people have yet to be closed. It is time now for the international community to enable this Council to uphold its moral and legal obligations under the Charter. Those who have the power and the responsibility to maintain international peace must act now to revive the process of negotiations and the hopes of peace in the Middle East.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement and for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Bahrain. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Buallay (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to start by congratulating you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I also want to express our appreciation of the work of your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of China, who ably chaired the Council during the past month.

I would like to state that my delegation fully supports the statement delivered by His Excellency the Permanent Representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Arab Group at the United Nations. We greatly appreciate your prompt response, Sir, in convening this meeting to consider the deteriorating situation in Palestine, a situation that poses a threat to international peace and security, which is the primary responsibility of the Security Council. The bloody events that are taking place in the occupied Palestinian territory will soon enter their second year. Meanwhile, the situation is worsening and becoming increasingly exacerbated by the policies of oppression and escalation that are being pursued by the Israelis. It has become quite clear that the Israeli leaders are pushing the situation and the region towards dire consequences.

At this meeting we do not want to dwell on the war crimes that Israel is committing against the Palestinian people. These crimes include the killing of infants and children, the demolition of houses, the burning of fields, the destruction of the environment, the siege of the Palestinian territories in order to starve the people, and the targeting of the institutions of the Palestinian National Authority. We do not want to talk about these aggressive Israeli policies because — since the media show horrific examples of them day and night — they are quite well known to everyone here. I believe we have all gotten used to seeing Palestinian infants and children torn apart as a result of ongoing Israeli terrorism against unarmed Palestinian civilians.

These aggressive Israeli practices are illegitimate and cannot but lead the Security Council to discuss the situation, particularly since these practices reflect an organized policy aimed at the total erosion of all the agreements that Israel has concluded with the Palestinian side since the Madrid Conference. This policy is an attempt by the Israelis to shed the commitments it made under these treaties and agreements.

This Council held a special session dedicated to serious efforts to protect civilians in situations of conflict. We all remember the meetings that were held and the statements that were made. Today, however, we are confronted with a special situation — indeed a dangerous one — which requires the international community and the Security Council in particular to assume the responsibility vested in it by the Charter of the United Nations. This responsibility is simply to maintain international peace and security.

In this context, we hope that the Security Council will fulfil its obligations and its duty as set forth in Article 24 of the Charter. We also hope that the Council will take the necessary measures to fulfil its role as clearly defined in Articles 41 and 42 of the Charter.

We do not expect miracles from the Security Council. All we want is for the Security Council to be an impartial judge. We want it to assume the role stipulated for it in the Charter, so that history will record that the Council is an impartial body — a body that has credibility and that fulfils its duties and obligations fully without indulging in double standards.

It is our hope that the Council will regain its credibility, that the Council will play its role and shake off the hesitation and inertia that have characterized it for many years.

To put it simply, the Security Council is the author of the two celebrated resolutions regarding the situation in the Middle East: 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the achievement of a peaceful, just and lasting settlement. The Council was also asked to fully implement these two resolutions. The peace process, which was dealt a severe blow by the policies of the present Israeli Government, cannot be reactivated without the full implementation of these two important resolutions, the acceptance of the principle of land for peace, and adherence to the references of the Madrid Conference.

Finally, we must reiterate that the problem of Palestine is not simply a problem of human rights, crimes against humanity, war crimes and so forth. It is a problem of the occupation of a land and a people by force. It is a problem of a threat to international peace and security. We therefore hope, first, that the Council will adopt a resolution by which international protection will be provided to the Palestinian people. This request has become an international one that gained the unanimous support of the Group of 8 during its summit meeting held in Genoa, Italy, last month. It is our hope that this international request will be translated into a resolution that will be adopted by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the Charter, which will put an end to the bloodbath that is currently taking place in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Secondly, the Council must seek to put an end to the ongoing Israeli occupation and to the suffering of the Palestinian people. We expect that this Council will take practical and tangible measures to contain an explosive situation, and not become a free forum for political rhetoric. The Palestinian people will continue their struggle and resistance against the Israeli occupation until they recover all their inalienable rights, particularly their right to establish their independent State on their land — and as Chairman Arafat says and repeats and we agree with him — with Jerusalem as its capital.

Consequently, we make an urgent appeal in this forum to the Security Council, the co-sponsors of the peace process and the international community to intervene promptly to put an end to Israeli aggression and oppressive, arbitrary measures that run contrary to all international laws and norms, to provide international protection to the Palestinian people and to restore the Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem to the status quo ante so that they will continue to play the role agreed upon within the context of the peace process, and thereby put the peace process back on track.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Bahrain for his remarks to the presidency.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is Ambassador Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (*spoke in Spanish*): First, I wish to congratulate you warmly, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. I am confident that under your able leadership, the work of the Council will be carried out in a constructive and an efficient manner. I also take this opportunity to congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Wang Yingfan, Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations, on the exemplary manner in which he steered the work of the Council during the month of July.

I am grateful to you, Mr. President, as well as to other members of the Council, for having given me the opportunity in my capacity as Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to participate in this important debate on the critical escalation of violence in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem.

The Committee is extremely worried by the latest dramatic escalation of tensions and violence in and around East Jerusalem and in areas under full Palestinian control. From what we have witnessed in the past several days, it appears that Israel has no intentions of abiding by agreements signed with the Palestinian side and has firmly decided on wide-scale military operations in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as in areas under full control of the Palestinian Authority. The latest and most striking incidents include the takeover of Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem and Abu Dis.

Besides being a blatant provocation, the Israeli flag triumphantly hoisted on the roof of this Palestinian institution was a vivid example of this policy. Three days later, in a massive offensive-like operation involving tanks, armoured personnel carriers and bulldozers, supported by helicopter gunships, the Israeli Defence Forces invaded the West Bank town of Jenin and is now apparently set to do the same in Beit Jalla and Bethlehem — all "A" areas under full Palestinian control.

Israel continues to use sophisticated weapons, such as missiles and helicopter gunships, in the extrajudicial killing of suspected Palestinian militants. The death toll is rising — now totalling more than 700 people, some 550 of them Palestinian. The Palestinian economy is decimated and the infrastructure of the occupied Palestinian territory has been further eroded.

What we hear as an excuse, obviously unacceptable, is that these measures are taken in response to the continuing violence on the part of the Palestinians, including suicide bombings in Israeli cities. We are certainly strongly opposed to any actions resulting in the loss of life — Israeli or Palestinian. After 34 years of occupation and with no prospect for a better future, with promises for a peace settlement shattered, the Palestinian people are left completely defenceless and vulnerable to arbitrary and excessively harsh actions by the Israeli military.

Only a couple of months ago, the recommendations made by the Mitchell Committee seemed to offer a way out of the impasse. However, the unrealistic proposition that all violence cease before the cooling-off period starts and negotiations resume has brought us to the current critical situation. The recent violations by Israel of international law and provisions of its agreements with the Palestinian side prove again that it has not been able to embrace fully and unequivocally the fundamental principle of "land for peace" and apply in practice the commitments and obligations it made at Madrid and Oslo.

For some time, we have been discussing ways of helping the parties out of the maze of the present crisis. Obviously, the two sides — already left to their own devices for too long — cannot achieve a breakthrough now. They need the assistance of the international community and this Council, which has been given the primary responsibility in the area of international peace and security.

Although all the elements are present, the Council has on numerous occasions failed to take any tangible action. We believe that the Mitchell Committee report and its recommendations should be implemented in their entirety. A framework for their implementation should be established within a reasonable time span and with international community monitoring the compliance of both parties. Negotiations on security, as well as consideration of the interim and permanent status issues, should be revived as a matter of urgency. The Committee is of the view that a permanent-status agreement, long overdue, should be finally reached on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Only once there is a sovereign Palestinian State, with guaranteed and safe borders, will there be peace. Only then will the two neighbouring peoples — the Israelis and the Palestinians — be able to enjoy security and prosperity and embark on building their relationship for the future.

For over a quarter of a century now, our Committee has been reiterating that the core of the problem has been the continuing illegal occupation by Israel of the Palestinian territory. Today, we call again upon the Government of Israel to respect and live up to the principles of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and the provisions of all relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

The Committee has repeatedly put forward its position with respect to the situation on the ground and the threat it poses to international peace and security, and with respect to the stalemate in the peace negotiations, the deteriorating humanitarian situation and the deplorable state of the Palestinian economy. I would like to conclude by urging the members of the Council to face the challenges before us and come up swiftly with concrete and decisive steps aimed at addressing the present crisis in the Middle East.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for his kind remarks addressed to the presidency.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Morocco. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to congratulate you warmly, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. We hope that under your presidency the Council will take practical steps to give a glimmer of hope to the peoples of the region so that dialogue and coexistence can be resumed and the logic of peace and cooperation will prevail over the logic of confrontation and vengeance. I would also like to thank you for having responded favourably to the request submitted by the member countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to convene a special meeting of the Council to take up the tragic situation in the Palestinian territories. Finally, I would like warmly to congratulate your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China, for his wisdom and clear-sightedness in guiding the work of the Council last month.

Just a few months ago, the world looked forward with optimism to the negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis. At the time, there was hope for possible progress as a first step towards restoring real, just peace to the Middle East — a peace that would enable all peoples in the region to finally be able to enjoy their legitimate rights, security and tranquillity. Commendable efforts were made at that time, in particular by the two sponsors of the peace process, as well as by the European Union and the Arab States, to encourage the two parties — Israel and the Palestinians — to move forward and resolve all difficulties. That breakthrough, to which we had so looked forward, was not forthcoming.

Thereafter the region found itself in a spiral of violence. Israeli forces adopted a policy of escalation — a policy of killing children and civilians, restricting the freedom of movement of Palestinians, reinforcing the economic blockade, confiscating land, destroying houses, consolidating the settlements policy, and balkanizing and desecrating Palestinian territory. Because of the international community's hesitation to put an end to these violations with sufficient promptness and determination, the Israeli forces continued to pursue their repressive policies with a vengeance. They also continued their policy of assassination, targeting Palestinian leaders and threatening to kill the relatives and families of those whom they suspected of participating in resisting the occupation.

Israeli forces invaded the premises of Palestinian institutions, in particular Orient House in Al-Quds Al-Sharif. The Israeli Government itself had previously recognized the legal status of Orient House. For over three decades it had agreed to respect that status and not attack it. It was then that the Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, His Majesty Mohammed VI, King of

Morocco, issued a statement condemning the occupation of Orient House by Israeli forces. His Majesty condemned all forms of violence and counter-violence and called upon the sponsors of the peace process — the United States and the Russian Federation — and the United Nations to take the necessary steps to halt the policy of occupation and of violation of the Holy Places and of Palestinian and Islamic institutions in Al-Quds Al-Sharif. The Chairman of the Committee appealed to the Security Council, the Secretary-General and international and regional organizations active on the question of peace to act swiftly to apply the ceasefire agreement and relaunch peace negotiations.

A people, like the Israelis, that wants to live in security with its neighbours cannot allow its leaders to humiliate and kill those who are its partners today and who will be its partners in the future. The international community and the Security Council cannot remain bystanders in the light of the violations committed by Israel. They cannot deny human values and ignore the international conscience. They cannot allow the region to become caught up in the cycle of attack and counter-attack. If things continue as they are, the situation will continue to get worse and the crisis will become evermore acute. That will only feed feelings of hatred. This policy cannot bring about any success in the efforts to achieve a ceasefire, to say nothing of the negotiations themselves. Nor can it lead to a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

We are absolutely convinced that things would not have reached this dangerous point and that this crisis would not have arisen had the Security Council adopted a resolution in March to send international observers to determine responsibility and to prevent acts of violence. We express the hope today that the Council will be able to live up to the aspirations of the peoples of the region, as well as those of the international community, by changing its policy and ensuring that the situation does not get any worse. My delegation appeals to the Council and to the Secretary-General to act robustly and responsibly in the light of the seriousness of the situation.

Measures must be adopted making it possible to implement the recommendations contained in the Mitchell report, to urge Israel to comply with its commitments and with international humanitarian law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention. We hope that the Security Council will do everything possible to provide the necessary international protection for the Palestinian people, and that it will exert all necessary pressure to break the vicious cycle of violence and to encourage the Israeli Government to give up the policy that it has been conducting for the last few months and to agree to resume negotiations where they had been left off.

My delegation asks the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities pursuant to the Charter. We are convinced that peace and security in the Middle East will continue to depend on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), within the context of the principle of land for peace, so that the Palestinians can enjoy all their rights, particularly their legitimate right to create their own State, with Jerusalem as its capital, and so that Israel will withdraw from the rest of the occupied Arab territories, including the Golan Heights and the Lebanese occupied territories.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Morocco for the kind words he addressed to the presidency.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Belgium. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. De Ruyt (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central Europe and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey as well as the countries of the European Free Trade Association that are members of the European Economic Area, Iceland and Liechtenstein, associate themselves with this statement.

The European Union once again today expresses its great concern at the violent events that have taken place in the Middle East in recent months and, in particular, in recent weeks. It rejects as unjustifiable violence in any form, which only exacerbates an already disquieting situation in the Middle East and renders ineffective the international community's efforts to relaunch a political process.

The parties must replace the logic of confrontation and violence without delay with that of dialogue and negotiation. It is high time that the parties reconsidered, turned resolutely towards the future and worked together to restore the climate of mutual trust that is necessary to break the vicious cycle of violence and retaliation. The European Union reminds the Israeli and Palestinian authorities that it is their responsibility to do everything possible to avoid any action that might claim new victims. We are convinced that there is no alternative to a political solution.

The escalation of violence, which has intensified dramatically in recent days, is intolerable. The European Union most vehemently condemns the latest suicide bombings. These acts, particularly the ones that target Israeli civilians, are hateful and repugnant in the extreme. Terrorism is a serious threat to the stability of the region. It must be resisted with the utmost rigour. The European Union also condemns all assistance to organizations that practise terrorism, whether in the form of financial aid or of providing weapons or training. The European Union calls upon the Palestinian Authority to do everything possible to bring the violence to an end, particularly by arresting and bringing to justice the perpetrators, instigators and sponsors of acts of terror.

Israel's decision to close Orient House and other institutions in Jerusalem does not serve the interests of peace and can only weaken the Palestinian leadership at a time when it is called upon to show firm resolve in the fight against extremism. It runs counter to the declared objective, which must remain the restoration of security for all. Unilateral acts can do nothing to alter the international community's long-standing position on the status of the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem. The European Union would like to see the closure reversed at the earliest date, and the archives returned, and would like to see Israel demonstrate maximal restraint by avoiding any act that could be considered as provocative.

The European Union believes that extrajudicial executions are not only illegal and unacceptable but are also obstacles to peace and are therefore damaging to both parties. The European Union calls on Israel to show the utmost restraint in the use of military force.

The European Union reaffirms its view that the basis of negotiations, and of a just and lasting peace, must be Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and other relevant resolutions, including the rejection of the acquisition of territory by war, the need for every State in the region to be able to live in security, and the principle of land for peace. We reaffirm our belief that the only way to restore security for all is to return to the route mapped out by the Madrid Conference, the Oslo Accords and the recommendations of the Mitchell report, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The Mitchell Committee's recommendations must be immediately and fully implemented. Any further delay or conditions placed on the implementation of those recommendations would play into the hands of extremists and would perpetuate the violence. An impartial monitoring mechanism is needed to overcome the obstacles that could impede the implementation of the recommendations. The European Union is convinced that this mechanism would serve the interests of both parties.

The European Union urges the two sides to open a sustained political dialogue without delay in order to break the deadlock, and it expresses its support for the initiatives along these lines, including the one taken by Mr. Shimon Peres, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel. It expresses the hope that such dialogue will open the way for a political approach to resolving the conflict.

The European Union remains willing to play its role, in close cooperation with the United States as well as with the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and all other partners committed to the quest for peace in the Middle East.

The European Union expects the Security Council to provide constructive, useful support in order to make this effort effective and in order to contribute to the implementation of the Mitchell Committee recommendations and to the resumption of dialogue between the parties.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Yemen. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Ashtal (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure to thank you, Sir, and to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I also wish to commend your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of China, who ably conducted the work of the Council last month.

We wish also to place on record our appreciation to you, Sir, for promptly convening this meeting, especially since the Council has recently displayed great reluctance to act on requests for a meeting to consider the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Since September 2000 — and more specifically, since the Sharon Government took power — the occupying Power, Israel, has continued its multifaceted military campaign against the Palestinian people, as well as its policy to impose closures, isolation and siege against Palestinian towns. It has escalated and intensified its aggression against the Palestinian people by using heavy weapons, including artillery, tanks and air forces, and by carrying out incursions into Palestinian territory. It has also attacked Lebanon and bombarded Syrian targets in Lebanon.

More recently, Israeli security forces occupied Orient House and nine other East Jerusalem offices of the Palestinian Authority, attacking and arresting Palestinian guards and confiscating important documents and archives, including maps and titles of ownership of Palestinian land. It has forcibly altered the situation in the village of Abu Dis, near East Jerusalem.

It is clear that Israel is implementing a carefully devised plan to destroy the peace process and to shed all its obligations and responsibilities under international law, including those deriving from Security Council resolutions on the Middle East, which provide a framework for a lasting peace. Events in the Palestinian territories since September 2000 clearly reveal the Zionist plan: Israel has escalated its violence, pursuing a policy of incremental escalation in both the political and the military spheres. It is reflected also in Israel's recourse to excessive force and in the extension of its military operations to include the assassination of civilians, the destruction of Palestinian Authority infrastructure and incursions into Palestinian Authority territory.

But more important, Israel continues to persist in its settlement activities, which is the core problem in Palestine. In press interviews, Sharon has claimed that the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967 are "contested" land, not occupied land as the international community has declared them.

The Security Council bears a special responsibility to put an end to the murder and displacement of the Palestinian people. It also bears the responsibility to bring about peace in accordance with its own long-standing resolutions. It is regrettable that the Council has failed to adopt a resolution that would protect the Palestinian people. This only encourages Israel's intransigence and its aggression against the Palestinian people.

What seems to call the Security Council's credibility into question is that the Council has asserted its authority in other parts of the world, while it is a mere spectator on issues relating to Israel and to Israel's violations of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949. The prevailing impression among the Arab public is thus that the Security Council is selective and adopts a double standard.

The peace process that began in the 1990s was supposed to promote the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) through the participation of the major Powers, especially the United States of America, in the search for an acceptable formula for the implementation of those resolutions. Great efforts were made to that effect, but, sadly, the peace process is at a near standstill. Indeed, there is a danger that the situation in the Middle East could deteriorate into all-out war.

All these factors bring the issue back to the Security Council. The Council must attach due importance to the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The Republic of Yemen hails the struggle of the Palestinian people and its steadfastness in confronting Zionist arrogance and the continued intensification and escalation. Israeli practices and crimes against the Palestinians — such as aggression, bloodshed, blockades, the desecration of holy places, the confiscation of land and the demolition of property — demand that the Security Council shoulder its responsibility to provide the Palestinian people with international protection and to force Israel to comply with resolutions of international legitimacy.

Israel's occupation of Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in holy Jerusalem constitutes yet another dangerous escalation. It is in flagrant violation of all international instruments and agreements to which Israel is party. Here again, this situation demands that the Security Council take a firm stand to reverse all the measures taken by Israel to occupy Orient House and other Palestinian institutions and to stop the demolition of houses, the confiscation of land, isolation and starvation, and to make Israel return to the negotiating table in accordance with signed agreements that the dispute should be settled on the basis of Security Council resolutions, the principle of land for peace, and the recommendations of the Mitchell report.

All of this should ultimately enable the Palestinian people to regain its rights and to establish an independent State of its own on its national territory, with Jerusalem as its capital.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Yemen for the kind words he addressed to the presidency.

The next speaker is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Akasaka (Japan): Let me first of all congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. My delegation would like to express its appreciation to you for providing us with the opportunity to present Japan's views on the grave situation we face in the Middle East.

Japan is deeply concerned that the situation in the occupied territories has been witnessing the worst crisis of the current peace process, which started in 1993. We are alarmed by the rising death toll there, mostly among civilians, including innocent children. We express our deepest condolences to the bereaved families, and our heartfelt sympathy to the injured. A vicious cycle of violence and hatred can do nothing but bring about more tragedy and decrease opportunities for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace, which can be brought about only by negotiations based on mutual trust.

Japan calls upon all the parties concerned to put an immediate end to acts of violence, provocation and retaliation, and to any other actions that could further aggravate the situation. We urge all the parties to exert maximum self-restraint.

In this context, Japan urges the Israeli Government to put an end to the excessive use of force, entries into the areas under the control of the Palestinian Authority, and the seizure of Orient House and other properties belonging to Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem. Japan also urges the Palestinian Authority to exert its utmost efforts to prevent the recurrence of terrorist attacks, which cannot be justified for any reason.

Japan would also like to stress that the recommendations of the Mitchell report should be fully implemented at the earliest possible time. In this connection, we would like to recall the G-8 Genoa Summit statement on the Middle East, issued on 21 July, which states that "third-party monitoring, accepted by both parties, would serve their interests in implementing the Mitchell report".

Mr. Seiken Sugiura, Japan's Senior Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, conveyed these views of Japan to the countries of the region during his trip to the Middle East earlier this month, when he met with political leaders of Egypt, Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

As Japan has stated on various occasions, the serious deterioration of the Palestinian economy is a matter of grave concern to us. Economic difficulties have a direct and serious impact on the real life of the Palestinians and no doubt have a negative effect on the peace process. Here again, we must avoid the vicious circle of the deterioration of the economy and the escalation of hatred and violence. In this context, the economic closure imposed on the Palestinians must be lifted and the tax transfer to the Palestinian Authority must be resumed. My delegation would like to add, in this regard, that Japan has extended contributions to the Palestinians amounting to $21 million since the end of last September, when the current state of violence broke out.

The crisis can be resolved only through serious efforts by both parties based on self-restraint and mutual trust. The international community must stand by such efforts. I would like to assure you, Mr. President, that Japan remains ready to extend every possible support, both political and economic, for the resolution of the current crisis, in cooperation and coordination with the international community.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Japan for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Kuwait. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Otaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me, Mr. President, to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to commend the remarkable efforts of the Permanent Representative of China, who chaired the Council last month.

The prompt response of the Council to the request of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to hold this important meeting to discuss the dangerous and deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territories only proves the Council's conviction that it must take steps to stop this deterioration by reason of the Council's responsibility to international peace and security, as stated in the United Nations Charter. In fact, the international community's standing idly by while the Palestinian people suffer since September last daily aggressions by the Israelis has encouraged the Israeli Government to intensify and escalate its aggression against the Palestinian people, with a view to imposing a status quo policy and to forcing the Palestinians to renounce their legitimate rights.

The situation in the occupied territories is very grave and poses a real threat to peace and stability in the region because of the insistence of the Israeli Government on its aggression and on its rejection of all international commitments and resolutions. From time to time, the Israeli authorities launch full-scale aggression against Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, thereby violating the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, using all forms of oppression and all forms of weapons. This has led to the death of hundreds and the injuring of thousands. Israel has been closing Palestinian areas in order to intensify the economic siege, which has exacerbated the suffering of the Palestinian people and has led to great deterioration in their standard of living. The Israeli Government is also pursuing policies of assassinations, arrests and demolition of houses, ignoring all the appeals of the international community to desist from such abominable practices, which violate basic human rights.

A few days ago, the occupation forces occupied Orient House and nine other offices of the Palestinian Authority in East Jerusalem, again violating the agreements signed with the Palestinian Authority within the framework of the peace process. In this context, we affirm our adherence to all the Security Council resolutions on Jerusalem, which declare null and void all the measures undertaken by Israel to change the features of this Holy City.

The Israeli Government is clearly trying to shake off its responsibilities in the agreements signed with the Palestinian Authority. It is flouting the basic principles agreed to in these agreements and more specifically, resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the principle of land for peace.

Israel's aggressive policies will continue unless the Security Council and the international community assume their responsibilities and take firm measures to put an end to the crimes perpetrated against the Palestinian people and to try their perpetrators, and to send international observers as soon as possible to protect the Palestinians from the oppression of the occupying force. In this respect, we call on the co-sponsors of the peace process, the European Union, and all peace-loving countries and organizations to exercise maximum pressure on Israel to respect the bilateral agreements it signed with the Palestinians and to implement the recommendations in the Mitchell report in order to pave the way for the resumption of negotiations within the context of the peace process and to reach a final settlement that includes all issues and that will give the Palestinian people all their legitimate rights.

The Israeli Government has to realize that its oppressive measures and practices will not result in the security it is seeking as long as it continues occupying other territories and as long as it ignores its international obligations and the agreements it signed with the Palestinian Authority within the peace process. This violation of agreements will only lead to an increase in the tension and in the cycle of violence and wars that has been witnessed in this vital region in the last four decades, and which has affected all the resources, potentials and capabilities that could have been directed to development.

For peace to be permanent, comprehensive and lasting, it has to be based on international legitimacy, more specifically, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the principle of land for peace, and the withdrawal of Israel from all the Arab land occupied in 1967, including the Golan Heights and territories in southern Lebanon.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm Kuwait's support for the struggle of the Palestinian people to achieve their inalienable rights and to establish an independent State on their territory, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Kuwait for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Mauritania. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ly (Mauritania) (*spoke in French*): I should like, before dealing with the item on the agenda today — the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question — to congratulate you, Sir, on behalf of my delegation, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. I am sure that your experience and personal qualities will help to enhance and enlighten our debate.

I should also like to congratulate the Permanent Representative of China, Ambassador Wang Yingfan, for his work as President of the Security Council in the month of July.

My delegation believes that no just and lasting peace can be achieved in the Middle East region, including occupied Palestine, as long as violence persists and remains a daily fact of life. My delegation deplores and condemns the recent serious developments in the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, which have led to the illegal and unacceptable occupation of Orient House, as well as other buildings, in which several headquarters of Palestinian institutions are located, in East Jerusalem, Jenin and, more recently, Khan Younis. This deplorable situation has, of course, led to a considerable loss of life, and contravenes the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949.

In the light of this continuing escalation of violence, the international community is required, now more than ever, to play a more positive role in order to restore peace and security to this region, which has suffered so much. This Council bears the principal responsibility for ensuring international peace and security under the Charter. That is why the dispatch, as soon as possible, of international observers to provide protection and security to the Palestinian civilian population has become an absolute necessity. Only the Security Council, which you represent here, bears responsibility for taking this step.

We welcome the recommendations contained in the Mitchell report, which the international community broadly supports. The implementation of those recommendations could help to restore an appropriate framework for a return to the negotiating table in order to complete work on agreements already concluded between the parties in Madrid, Oslo and Sharm el-Sheikh.

Despite the setbacks and obstacles on the path towards the settlement of the Palestinian question, my delegation remains convinced that peace is still attainable. That is why we reaffirm our commitment to the peace process that began in Madrid.

In conclusion, I should like to say that only international legality and legitimacy can ultimately prevail. We believe that relevant Security Council resolutions — 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) — as well as the principle of land for peace, remain the only basis for a final resolution of the Palestinian question. This should lead to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Mauritania for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Malaysia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): Allow me to congratulate you — and your country, Sir — on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. I would also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Wang Yingfan of China, for his outstanding stewardship of the Council last month.

I should like to commend you, Mr. President, for convening this urgent meeting of the Security Council to consider the grave situation in the occupied Arab territories. I should like to thank the other members of the Council for acceding to the request for this meeting, jointly made by the Chairman of the Islamic Group and the Chairman of the follow-up committee of the ninth Islamic summit conference.

My delegation is grateful to Ambassador Nasser Al-Kidwa, the Permanent Observer for Palestine, who briefed the Council this morning on the current grave situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. Ten months of almost uninterrupted violence, following the provocation of September last year, have taken a heavy toll of human life and injuries. Over 600 people have died, an overwhelming number of whom are Palestinian. The cycle of violence has continued unabated and promises to become worse in the coming days and weeks unless the international community, particularly this Council, intervenes to put an end to it. Indeed, if the Council intends to carry out its responsibility under the Charter, it will have little choice but to intervene.

The measures taken by the Israeli Government in the name of security have reached dangerous and untenable proportions. These include continued reliance on excessive use of force and the overwhelming use of military power, the invasion of Palestinian territory, and a vicious grip on Palestinian life in the occupied territories through closures and seizures, the destruction and demolition of Palestinian properties and other forms of harassment and intimidation of the Palestinian population in pursuance of an indiscriminate policy of collective punishment.

The forcible seizure of Orient House in East Jerusalem strikes at the very basis of the peace process and further diminishes any hope of reviving it. The takeover of Orient House and of other Palestinian institutions, coupled with assassinations of targeted Palestinian officials, is among the most arrogant and provocative of these actions by the Israeli authorities. These latest actions are tantamount to the abrogation of all the agreements that Israel has entered into with the Palestinian side since the Oslo Accords. The decision of the Israeli occupying Power to take these steps, particularly the closure of Palestinian institutions, represents a dangerous escalation in the Israeli military campaign that has been waged against the Palestinian people since last September. It also represents an assault on Palestinian national dignity and Palestinian rights in Jerusalem.

Clearly, these actions are not likely to cow the Palestinian people as intended. On the contrary, they are likely to heighten Palestinian anger, frustration and despair, and will inflame the situation even further, resulting in even greater tension and polarization between Israelis and Palestinians.

No peace-loving country, including my own, condones violence, particularly against innocent civilians. But violence begets violence. Hence the importance of abandoning such policies forthwith, in favour of dialogue and negotiations.

In addressing this issue at this point in time, the Council cannot but be cognizant of two important facts or realities which must be addressed: first, the continued Israeli occupation of Palestine and other Arab territories; and secondly, the continued violation of the human rights of the Palestinians and other Arabs living in the occupied territories. Both must come to an end, as they are in clear and irrefutable violation of international law, humanitarian law and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. Israel must be strongly and constantly reminded of its obligations under international law and the Charter of the United Nations to withdraw from those territories and to respect the human rights of their inhabitants. Its wrongful and illegal actions in those territories should not be condoned or, least of all, protected. Israel, like other Members of the Organization, must fulfil its obligations under the Charter.

Pressures similar to those that have been exerted by the Council on other errant and non-complying Members of the Organization in the past must also now be exerted on Israel. Failure to do so is tantamount to treating Israel as a special case, a privileged Member of the Organization, a Member that is somehow exempt from complying with the requirements of international law. Yes, Israel is a State, a Member of this Organization, but beyond that it has no special status in the community of nations. It should be treated like any other State and must fulfil all its obligations and responsibilities without exception. Like other States that have to grapple with issues of internal peace and security, it should have to conform, as others do, with the rules of international and humanitarian law. There should be no special dispensation for Israel either here in this Council or in any other international forum.

In the past, the Council was not able to carry out its responsibility under the Charter on this issue, because either it was prevented from doing so or it was unable to implement the resolutions it had passed on the situation in Palestine. Clearly, in the light of the grave situation obtaining in the occupied Palestinian territories, the Council cannot afford to maintain the same position. Non-action by the Council in the face of continued provocative actions by Israel in the occupied territories would be a gross dereliction of the Council's responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It would also be condoning the continued use of force and military power by Israel over the helpless inhabitants of the occupied territories. More significantly, it would signal the Council's ambivalence or lack of support for the peace process — or, worse still, its indirect support for resolution of the conflict by non-political means. By not doing anything, the Council would once again be turning a deaf ear to the pleas of the Palestinian people living under occupation and would be demonstrating its lack of will and its impotence on the issue of Palestine.

The Council will have to seriously ponder its role regarding the issue of Palestine. For far too long it has allowed itself to be sidelined on the basis of the argument of a few that a resolution of the issue should best be pursued by the parties directly concerned in the conflict, or that the Council's involvement would only "complicate" the sensitive negotiations between the parties. Surely, in the face of recent events those arguments can no longer be persuasive. They should not have been persuasive in the first place.

The peace process is for all intents and purposes dead, thanks — or rather, no thanks — to the policies and practices of the new Israeli Government. It is incumbent upon this Council to exert every effort to revive the process on an urgent basis, especially in the face of the hesitation or reluctance on the part of other influential parties to be more directly involved in jump-starting the process.

We, the international community, must rekindle the faith among both Palestinians and Israelis in a peaceful resolution of the conflict and douse any prospects of a return to war. In that regard we must give our strong and unqualified support to the report of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-finding Committee, the Mitchell report. That report provides a good and viable basis on which to end the cycle of violence, break the deadlock and build the necessary bridge back to the negotiating process, which alone guarantees enduring peace and security for the parties concerned — as opposed to continuing conflict or warfare between them.

My delegation considers the draft resolution being circulated as rather modest in its objectives. But we support it, as it provides the practical basis for consensus in the Council, which is important if the Council is to carry out its duties. The draft resolution, inter alia, calls for the immediate cessation of all acts of violence, provocation and destruction, and for the return to the positions and the regimens that existed prior to September 2000. It also calls for the speedy and comprehensive implementation of recommendations of the Mitchell report, for the establishment of a monitoring mechanism regarding the implementation of that report, and for Israel to reverse all actions taken against Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in and around East Jerusalem. Only those and other proposed measures contained in the draft resolution will constitute a reasonable basis for a return to negotiations, paving the way for lasting peace between Palestinians and Israelis — instead of more intimidation and harassment or further military action in a vain attempt to break the spirit of the Palestinian people.

My delegation also believes that the co-sponsors of the peace process, the United States and the Russian Federation, as well as the European Union and the larger international community, must play a more active role in defusing the current tense situation and in encouraging the parties, particularly Israel, to return to negotiations. We once again reiterate our call to the Security Council to shoulder its responsibility and to take the necessary action in that regard. We continue to believe that there is a need to establish an international observer force for the protection of Palestinian civilians, as well as to ensure compliance with relevant Security Council resolutions, international law, international humanitarian law and existing Palestinian-Israeli agreements. Any attempt by this Council to appease the occupying Power will not only make the situation more dangerous, it will be wrong, and it will call into question the credibility of the Council. This must be avoided at all costs. My delegation therefore appeals to the Council and the Secretary-General to respond vigorously to diffuse the current explosive situation and to help relaunch the peace process as a matter of great urgency. Clearly, the Council can ill afford to treat the Palestinian issue in its present circumstances as in the past.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Malaysia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Bebars (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): We congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. We are confident that you are capable of conducting the affairs of this Council, as far as this important issue is concerned, so that the Council can assume its responsibility as spelled out in the Charter for maintaining international peace and security. I also wish to commend and thank the Permanent Representative of China, who ably presided over the Council last month.

We meet today at a time when the international community is gravely concerned over the serious developments in the occupied territories, particularly Jerusalem. The hope for peace indeed faces an acute crisis. Since last September, the Palestinian people have been subject to violent and aggressive Israeli practices that have resulted in hundreds of martyrs and thousands of wounded. Property of the Palestinian people has been destroyed and the Palestinian economy is in shambles. This has led to frustration and despair.

The problems facing the peace process are due mainly to Israel's reneging on its commitments reached in bilateral agreements, its ongoing occupation and settlement activities, and its disregard for international legitimacy and United Nations resolutions and for the bases and principles of the peace process, which are "land for peace", including Holy Jerusalem.

The crux of the problem in the occupied Palestinian territories today is the Israeli occupation. The practices of the Israeli occupation in the Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, constitute grave violations of resolutions of international legitimacy, as represented by the United Nations and the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, in those areas. It is inconceivable and unacceptable that the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, should turn a blind eye to these practices at a time when calls resonate from all directions for respect for human rights.

Security is a legitimate demand of all peoples of the Region. No one can deny any people the right to security. However, the security of one population cannot be realized at the expense of the security and rights of its neighbours and the murder and the assassination of their children, the demolition of their houses, the burning of their farms, the cutting off of their livelihoods, and their torture and starvation. Security can be achieved only in a situation based on legitimacy, justice and equality.

Consequently, Egypt has been persistent in calling on the international community to act firmly and quickly to push the parties to resume the peace process on a sound basis, and not emphasize the security aspects alone, without dealing with the crux of the problem: the need for peace based on justice, equality and respect for the full legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

Egypt has emphasized the need to send observers to Palestine to help calm the situation within the framework of implementing the Mitchell recommendations, in order to reach negotiations on final status, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973); the principles and guarantees of the Madrid Conference, particularly the principle of "land for peace"; and the agreements concluded between the two parties and guaranteed by world States concerned. Egypt also emphasizes that without the settlement of that dispute, which is the crux of the Israeli-Arab conflict, in a just and comprehensive manner, and without Israel's full withdrawal from the Syrian and Lebanese territories, the Middle East, strategically important to the whole world, will remain an area full of tension and instability that will in turn threaten the legitimate interests of those countries and all other countries concerned.

The present crisis has been triggered by a provocation related to a very special area of the occupied territory — Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa Mosque. These are centrally important to the Arab and Muslim worlds, which do not accept the desecration of any of their holy places. These places have been transgressed, contrary to all heavenly and worldly laws. This represents an insult to the sentiments and rights of the millions of believers who have been taught to respect other people's faiths. We must reaffirm to the whole world, represented by the Council, the need for Israel to withdraw from all Arab occupied territories occupied since June 1967, including Jerusalem, and for Israel to respect the holy status of that city and to return it to the Palestinians to faithfully safeguard it.

I wish to emphasize that the recent bloody events confirm one fact: occupation has no future, however mighty the occupier, and that a just and balanced peace is the basis for all stability and security in the region. Thus, we hope that the Israeli side will commit itself to the resolutions of international legitimacy and will work seriously to stop aggressive practices in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem. We hope it will stop perpetrating violence against Palestinian institutions and property in East Jerusalem, particularly the illegal occupation of Orient House and the confiscation of its archives, which are an essential part of the history, heritage and memory of the Palestinian people.

Egypt still hopes that a peaceful, comprehensive and just settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict can be realized despite the setbacks caused by the Israeli side. Consequently, Egypt calls for Israeli conduct to be commensurate to and in conformity with all attempts to realize our objective: a firm, just and lasting peace. We hope that Israel will recognize this.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Egypt for his kind words addressed to the presidency.

The next speaker is the representative of Iraq. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I wish you every success in your work. I would also like to thank you for promptly agreeing to the request made by Palestine and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to hold this important meeting. I also cannot fail to take this opportunity to thank the representative of China, Ambassador Wang Yingfan, for his efficient and successful conduct of the Council's meetings last month.

The Council is convened today, for the third time in less than six months, to discuss the situation in Palestine in the light of increased Zionist aggression against the defenceless Palestinian people. The Council is meeting at a time when the Zionist entity, the occupying Power, is carrying out daily bombings of Palestinian towns, villages and refugee camps using the most sophisticated weapons of destruction supplied by the United States, in particular F-16 fighter planes, attack helicopters, depleted uranium shells and toxic gas.

Against whom, exactly, is this merciless war machine pitted? The answer is against unarmed civilians, innocent women and children, throwing stones at the occupier and getting killed or injured by the hundreds and thousands. Civilian Palestinian dwellings are being bombarded and public buildings are being destroyed. The Palestinians are prevented from going home. They are driven from their houses. Evacuations and confiscations take place daily. Human rights are trampled underfoot. Operations of assassination and physical liquidation are committed against them. Moreover, they must face collective punishment, siege and isolation.

Despite the gravity of these crimes, which are being committed against the people of Palestine day after day and hour after hour, and despite the fact that 63 Palestinian letters of protest have been sent to the Security Council in the course of recent months to request prompt intervention to end Zionist terrorism, the Security Council has remained silent and powerless to intervene to end the suffering of the Palestinian people. The Council will continue to be powerless because its power is constrained by a tyrannical, arrogant and imperialist Power. I am referring to the United States of America, a country that provides military, moral and material cover for the crimes that the Zionist entity is committing against the people of Palestine and their children.

Unfortunately, the Council's policy of double standards in dealing with problems affecting the Islamic world in general and the Arab world in particular — and the Israeli occupation of Palestine above all — is a flagrant example of the injustice and ill-treatment suffered by the people of the third world, and more particularly by Muslim people. The death of Palestinian children and civilians and the death machines used by Israel for physical elimination have to date not been enough to wrest from the Council even a single declaration, however timid, condemning Zionist terrorism and deploring the acts committed by that neo-Nazi entity.

The President of the United States misses no opportunity to contact the criminal Zionists to offer them his condolences when a single Israeli soldier is killed by a hero of the Palestinian resistance. Yet, Palestinian children are killed, besieged and starved with the blessing of the United States, offered without remorse or morality. The United States loves to give others lessons in morality. It also claims to be devoted to human rights, while shamelessly supporting the criminal Zionist occupying forces and calling on both parties, including the victims of aggression, to show the same restraint and moderation in order to save the peace process. But what peace are we talking about? What kind of neutral sponsor of peace is the United States speaking about? What we are saying here is that the resistance of the people of Palestine is a right that cannot be taken away. It is the legitimate right to self-defence, which is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in principles of international law.

True peace cannot be established by cajoling the occupier and imposing submissive solutions on vulnerable, occupied people. Peace can be established only at the cost of a bitter struggle; it must be torn out of the hands of the occupier by all means available. Such peace cannot be achieved through American mediation, because the United States sides with the occupier. It is armed struggle and the national intifada of the Palestinian people that will be able to wrest Palestinian rights from the aggressor. It is Palestinians who are daily watering the land of Palestine with their blood.

Allow me in this Chamber to hail the valiant, courageous people of Palestine, who are fighting Zionist and American imperialism every day and every hour. I pay true and sincere tribute to the Palestinian martyrs who without hesitation give their lives to defend their country. I also wish to salute those who resist in defence of their rights and their homeland.

The crimes committed by the Zionist occupation forces against defenceless, innocent Palestinian citizens have exceeded all the crimes previously committed by occupiers, as the annals of history show. Even the apartheid regime of South Africa, despite its brutality, would never have dared to use fighter planes against innocent, defenceless civilians, as the Israeli Zionists do when they shell peaceful Palestinian villages and towns.

The sadism of the Zionist occupiers and the barbarity of the occupation have succeeded in driving 68 per cent of the inhabitants of occupied Palestine from their homes since the beginning of the occupation in 1948. That is why there are 4.5 million Palestinian refugees waiting to return to their homes. The Zionist occupier is uprooting more than 150,000 olive trees from Palestinian land, in addition to confiscating all water resources from the Palestinians, who own the land and the water. The occupation forces, in plain view and with the knowledge of everyone, delight in detaining old people and sick people for many hours at inspection and transit points. Media reports tell of sick people dying at crossing points because of the severity of the wait and the humiliation and insults to which they are subjected during long waiting periods.

The international community, represented by States and Governments and by the United Nations itself, where we are meeting today, must work to restore the right of the Palestinian people to the return of all usurped territory, and the right of refugees to return to their homes, from which they had been chased by the Zionist usurpers. The Security Council today must shoulder its responsibility. It must adopt appropriate measures under the United Nations Charter to put an end to Zionist aggression, to make the occupation forces scrupulously respect the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949. We believe that the Security Council should respond on an emergency basis to Iraq's offer to devote not 1 million but 1 billion euros of its oil revenues to assisting its brothers in occupied Palestine, because they are in urgent need of economic assistance.

If we all agree that the acts committed by Zionism have led to the destruction of the economic infrastructure of Palestine, why then would the Council not allow Iraq to assist its Palestinian brothers in rebuilding their economic infrastructure? That would mean keeping silent in the face of suffering, accepting it and contributing indirectly to the continuation of this tragic situation.

In conclusion, I would like to say, so as not to waste more time in making speeches, that what we must do is to adopt specific, emergency measures to protect the Palestinian people from the murders and massacres that have been committed against it for more than 50 years and to enable it to regain its due rights. If that is not done, everyone — and I say everyone — will bear the responsibility, and regrets will then serve no purpose.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Iraq for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Oman. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Hassan (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me first, Sir, to extend to you and to your friendly country, Colombia, our sincere congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of August. We are confident that your diplomatic expertise and your knowledge of international affairs will crown the Council's work with success and will assist it in attaining the objectives we all desire, foremost of which is to preserve international peace and security.

The Sultanate of Oman welcomes the holding of this emergency meeting of the Council to consider the latest developments in the occupied Palestinian territories. We look forward to the time when the Council will shoulder its responsibilities under the United Nations Charter through the adoption of practical measures that would preserve peace, security and stability everywhere in the world, without discrimination, selectivity or double standards when dealing with the various issues brought before it.

After many previous attempts, the time has come for the Council to respond positively to the just demands of the Palestinian people by providing the necessary international protection to that people, which is a victim of oppression, isolation, repression and systematic assassination, all perpetrated against the elderly, women, children and other civilians, and by protecting it from the destruction of its institutions and the offices of the Palestinian Authority — something which the Israeli authorities had promised in 1996 that they would not do. This is not to mention the occupation of Orient House, which shows Israel's readiness to exacerbate the situation by increasing tension and by using its vast military arsenal, as everyone in the Council and in the entire international community knows.

That constitutes a flagrant violation of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of international humanitarian law and of other relevant international instruments. This is all taking place following vigorous attempts by Israel to prevent Palestinian civilians from benefiting from these protections. The Security Council must therefore take immediate effective measures to provide them with such protections. Such action by the Council would surely result in the establishment of a machinery that would be binding on Israel.

Israel's persistent resort to collective punishment, blockade and killing should make one thing perfectly clear to the Council: that Israel does not care about international criticism and that it ignores all the agreements it has reached with the Palestinian side over the past decade. Israel has undermined hopes for peace in the region; therefore, the Council must no longer stand idly by as these crimes against humanity are daily committed in full view. We would ask whether Israel, as a Member of this Organization, is bound by international agreements, as other Member States are. Or is Israel exempt from such international instruments?

The Sultanate of Oman has been in the forefront of countries that believe in the peace process and that view it as a natural, civilized way to settle the Middle East conflict. We continue to believe that there is a glimmer of hope that it will be possible to return to the negotiating table. But that can take place only with manifest political will.

My Government welcomes the Egyptian-Jordanian proposal as a serious, promising initiative that ought to be considered. Along with the recommendations set out in the Mitchell report calling for a freeze on illegitimate settlements, that initiative could create a propitious atmosphere and pave the way for a return to the negotiating table by the Palestinians and the Israelis.

Today, the Palestinian people is in greater need of international protection than ever before, in view of its daily human suffering as a result of the ongoing Israeli military escalation. That is a legitimate request in line with the norms and principles of international legitimacy, and we make that request of the Security Council today. To allow these Israeli practices to continue unabated would cause the Middle East to descend into a cycle of violence and counter-violence.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Oman for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Babaa (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I congratulate you most sincerely, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. I have every confidence that, with your wisdom, skill and leadership, you will ably guide the Council in its consideration of the important and serious issue before it today with a view to bringing about peace with justice, for there can be no peace without justice.

My thanks go also to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of China, for his successful presidency last month.

The Palestinian question and its causes, its reasons and its consequences are well known to all, and have been well documented in the United Nations. There are dozens of relevant United Nations resolutions, and prominent among them are those adopted by the Security Council. As long as those resolutions remain unimplemented — and implementation includes the return of the Palestinian people to its land and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State — the problem will continue to pose a threat to international peace and security.

The core of the Palestinian problem is not the implementation of the Mitchell plan or the Tenet recommendations. It is the 34 years of continued occupation that have naturally led to the violence. The real sources of the violence are: the Zionist military occupation; the attempts by the forces of occupation to impose a fait accompli of occupation, settlement-building, expulsion and annexation and to create new facts on the ground to provide a rationale for expanding settlements, building new ones, seizing more land and expelling and displacing Palestinians; the refusal of the Tel Aviv regime to honour its commitments; and that regime's continuous violations of international law and international humanitarian law.

The problem is that the Palestinian people continues tenaciously to embrace its land and, in a variety of ways, to put forth its just demand for freedom and independence — a demand shared by all other occupied peoples. The problem is that this collides with the Zionist ambition to seize all Palestinian land and create a national homeland for the Jews in the whole of the promised land. The problem is that, like any other indigenous people, the Palestinians have sanctified the land of their forefathers, on which they have lived for thousands of years; like every other people, they can be immensely steadfast. There can be no sacrifice too great for them as they defend what remains of their land, despite the use of heavy artillery, F-16 aircraft, tanks, missiles and the latest military technology against unarmed civilians, towns, villages and other population centres. Stones thrown by children do not deserve a response by Apache aircraft and tanks, leading to mass killing which does not discriminate among women, children and babies. The result has been more than 600 Palestinians martyred, 100,000 wounded and 10,000 disabled, some of them blinded because the occupying forces are carefully trained to shoot their victims in the eyes.

The problem is that, in addition to this arbitrary killing, the forces of occupation regularly bulldoze Palestinian houses, farms and factories; seize Palestinian land and give it to new settlers; prevent Palestinians from working; and stop food, water and even medicine from reaching them.

The collective punishment against them is diversified and deftly implemented. That has led the Palestinians to resort to throwing stones and staging peaceful protests, which have been met with bullets, missiles, tanks and aircraft. Psychiatric hospitals and centres in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank are filled with hundreds of Palestinian children suffering psychiatric disorders because of the Israeli raids, aggressions and brutalities that they see before them every day. UNICEF has noted that 1,300,000 Palestinian children are living in a state of terror and hypertension, suffering from an inability to concentrate due to their nightly suffering from nightmares and involuntary urination, because of the daily bombardment of their houses and their population centres. All these practices occur daily before the eyes of the whole world, which does nothing about it. This records the degree of man's cruelty towards his brothers.

Another problem is the racist laws implemented by the Zionist authorities in the occupied Palestinian land, among which is the right of return, which allows Jews everywhere in the world to immigrate and to reside in the occupied territories, while it does not allow the Palestinians born there, where their forefathers lived for thousands of years, to reside there. Such racist policies and practices have compelled them to emigrate, which has led to the establishment of a new apartheid regime in the Arab region. But this new apartheid regime does not just attempt to control the indigenous population, as was the case in South Africa, but also seeks to expel the Palestinian people and to seize their land and their property.

The problem is that the Zionists in Tel Aviv consider that the Zionist project will not be completed until a "Greater Israel" has been established on biblical land reaching from the Nile to the Euphrates, as symbolized by the two blue lines on the Israeli flag. Jews are therefore brought from everywhere in the world, whether they are 100 per cent Jewish or even 1 per cent Jewish. The important thing is to reinforce the demographic power of the Zionist entity and reinforce what they call their defences, while, in fact, these offensive forces carry out the Zionist dream of expansion.

The problem is that the brutal occupier wants both peace and land, and he will not be capable of getting both. Within the context of this horrible plan, we would like to point out that the Palestinian territory that was occupied in 1967 was called, in the terminology of the United Nations, "the occupied territories". The Jews complained, and it was later called "the territories". This was part of its campaign in every part of the world. Now they call this occupied land the "disputed territories".

One of the problems with respect to this question is that the Palestinians, the rightful owners, who have a continuous history of living in this land, are not allowed to enjoy their rights in a legal manner. Meanwhile, the usurpers, the Israelis, those who falsified history and created it through historical myths with the assistance of the major Powers. At a time when the international community is trying to bring war criminals who have committed crimes against humanity before the courts, we see that the war criminal of Sabra and Shatila, who is known to all of you, has returned to become another butcher in Gaza, Nablus, Hebron, Khan Younis, and many other Palestinian towns and cities. To justify this, they say he has changed. He has said to his press that he has not changed. In fact, he was a war criminal, and he is still a war criminal, and he will continue to be a war criminal.

The policy of organized assassinations and liquidations, which is implemented by the occupying Zionist forces against the symbols of resistance, and against unarmed civilians, is also a clear violation of article 32 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. The death squads sent by the occupying forces to assassinate those they consider the leaders of the resistance to the continuous occupation act before the eyes of the world, in broad daylight and not at night. These are the brutal practices of the Tel Aviv regime, which considers itself above international law, while Palestinian prisoners are treated as guilty and not innocent. All forms of torture are practised against them clearly and explicitly. This criminal conduct, this continuous policy of terrorism, should be condemned by the international community and by the Security Council.

The occupying force has recently occupied Orient House and many of the buildings that represent Palestinian sovereignty in the occupied city. If the Security Council does not take immediate action against the occupation of Orient House, it means it is giving a green light to the occupying force to seize Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, and all the churches and all quarters of Jerusalem, and to Judaize them. If the Council does not take any action now, it will contradict all previous action it has taken, actions that consider Jerusalem part of the occupied Palestinian territory, to which the norms of international law and the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention apply.

In addition to the expulsion, the killing, the starving, the assassination and destruction, the Zionists have added another element to their racist practices. This is the racial and ethnic contempt and despite of Palestinians and Arabs. The British newspaper, *The Independent*, on 17 April, reported how Zionist leaders have described Arabs and Palestinians. Menachem Begin, the former Prime Minister, described Arabs as cattle walking on two legs, Rafael Eytan, the former chief of staff, called them "cockroaches", Barak calls them "crocodiles", Rehavam Zeevi, the present Minister of Tourism, calls them "scorpions", Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, the spiritual leader of the Shas party, and many other rabbis have provided a religious cover for Zionist practices and describe Palestinians and Arabs on one occasion as "snakes and serpents", and on another as "apes, pigs and ants" that should be exterminated. The paper pointed out that the racist regime in South Africa, during the days of apartheid, did not dare to describe the blacks in South Africa using racial epithets, but Tel Aviv does it openly and insolently. All the countries of the world curtailed relations with the apartheid regime. But the Tel Aviv regime, which had excellent relations with the apartheid regime in all spheres and, in particular, the military sphere, was not called to account owing to double standards, despite its racist practices and its continuous violation of the rights of the Palestinian people, a matter that contradicts the commitments of the countries of the world to defend human rights and to suspend relations with any country that continues to violate those rights.

We have learned from the recent past that if a Zionist kills 20 Palestinians, he is immediately declared to be mentally disturbed. And they create a memorial for him to sanctify him, as occurred in the case of the criminal Goldstein at Hebron. But if a Palestinian kills Israelis that have seized his land and his honour, then he is considered a terrorist. This Zionist stereotyping is a matter that the Arab world has had to put up with for a long time, but everybody should understand that there is no difference between Arab blood and Jewish blood. Arab blood is not cheap water and Jewish blood is not expensive plasma. We are all equal.

The siege, the starvation, the killings, and the ethnic cleansing that are now taking place in the occupied Palestinian territories are marketed by the Zionist campaign as the appropriate response to Palestinian violence. In fact, what is happening now in the Palestinian territory is similar to the massacres, ethnic cleansing and mass expulsions that took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, which required international humanitarian intervention. The failure of the international community and the Security Council to intervene in the occupied Palestinian territories and to provide protection to the Palestinians is a crime against humanity.

The hesitation of the Security Council, which is entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security, to intervene and protect the Palestinian people not only rewards the aggressor and enables it to continue its actions, but will encourage any future aggressor to violate international law in other parts of the world. That constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

Some Zionist writers in the Zionist media try to justify the heinous crimes against the Palestinian people. In their articles, which are published regularly, they use words such as "beating", "expulsion", "attack", "destruction", "seizure" and "assassination" in a way that encourages Zionist stereotypes of people in the occupied Palestinian territories and promotes ethnic cleansing and the idea of finding a final solution in the form of extermination, transfer or expulsion.

Such writers continue to fill the media with strange articles and to tell lies, as if the Palestinians are the aggressors and the Zionists are the victims. They continue to defend the inhumane and racist policies implemented by the occupation forces against the Palestinian people — the displacement, starvation and humiliation — with impunity within the international community.

A brutal Jewish campaign was launched against a British journalist, Robert Fisk, who exposed Israeli practices in southern Lebanon and Palestine. Fisk pointed out that if a journalist in the West wants to escape criticism he must follow the rules prescribed by the Israelis — as if Israel is the party that is under siege and occupied and the Palestinians are the party engaging in violence and forcing their children to be killed. Nobody asks why Israeli soldiers kill so many children and young people. The Zionist organizations attack anybody who tries to point out what is happening in the occupied Arab territory.

The International Committee of the Red Cross was harshly criticized for telling the truth and for considering the establishment of settlements in the occupied territories a war crime under international humanitarian law. Human Rights Watch was likewise criticized, as well as Amnesty International, which was planning to introduce a comprehensive report at the Conference against racism to be held at the end of this month in Durban, South Africa. That report includes details about the inhumane racist practices to which the Palestinian people are subjected by the Zionist occupying forces on a daily basis in the occupied territories.

The Vienna-based organization, international friends of humanity, has condemned the attempts to kill Palestinian infants and children in cold blood. Even the French organization, Reporters Without Borders, has condemned the practices of the occupying forces against journalists who are trying to cover events and tragedies during the intifada in the occupied territories. In its report of last month, it placed responsibility for injuries to 30 journalists on the Israeli forces and called on the occupying forces to provide them with protection.

His Holiness the Pope has pointed out the importance of returning to the norms of international law, ending the seizure of land by force and emphasizing the right of people to self-determination and respect for the purposes and principles set out in the articles of the Charter.

On 10 June 2001, an Israeli journalist, Gideon Levy, wrote an article stating that Palestinian violence is the result of occupation. He said:

> "Who will state that the occupation is an act of violence, the most terrible of all, that terrorism is not only suicide bombers ...? ...That depriving a whole nation of freedom of movement and placing that nation in a prison is an act of violence more cruel than any in the past, and stirs a people to fight using whatever means it has? That the incitement in the Palestinian media is not that much worse that the incitement on Israeli television and radio? That the present war is first and foremost a war over Netzarim and Yitzhar, and that if they or all the settlements did not exist our situation would be immeasurably better? That the roots of Palestinian terrorism have to be sought in the Israeli occupation and not in the Palestinians' genes?"

Israeli journalist Uri Avnery wrote in April this year:

> "The mighty Israeli army has not succeeded in breaking the backbone of the uprising. It has tried everything: gunship helicopters, tanks, cannons, liquidations, destruction of whole neighbourhoods, closure, siege, demolition of homes, uprooting of plantations — and ... the Palestinians continue to be stand on their feet and fight."

He continued:

> "The Sharon-Peres Government enjoys the overwhelming support of the United States, which provides it with arms and money and exercises its veto in the Security Council on Israel's behalf ... a European diplomat has said that Israel is in practice the fifth permanent member of the Security Council with the veto power."

The forces of hegemony in the international community have given the Zionist entity great powers and continue to overlook international law; they have not called it to account. Arab countries are still subjected to cruel sanctions by the Security Council on the basis of accusations that have not been proved, yet the Israeli regime continues for half a century to violate international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter.

In an earlier report, the Secretary-General called for the protection of the weak and the innocent from the harm that results from armed conflict and for the development of strategies to achieve those objectives and to punish all those who violate international law. The international community responded in the case of Bosnia, Kosovo and East Timor, but it has done nothing when faced with the tragedies of the people in the occupied Palestinian territories. The Security Council last March should have abided by its responsibilities under the Charter and intervened to protect the Palestinian people from the butchers and to stop the bloodshed. But the only super-Power in the world, which is supposed to be an honest broker, stopped it from doing so and has given the occupying force a green light and a licence to kill children and other innocent people. If we want to put an end to the volatile situation in the region, and if the Security Council wants to maintain its credibility, the international community and the Security Council must intervene quickly before it is too late to save the situation and to save the occupied Palestinian people from their executioners.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for his kind words addressed to me.

I would like to say to the members of the Council and the other delegations that there are more speakers on my list. Given the lateness of the hour, at the end of this long day, with the consent of the members of the Council I would like to suspend meeting now. It will resume tomorrow, Tuesday, 21 August, at 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 6.55 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4357 (Resumption 1)/Corr.1

Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

Provisional

4357th meeting

Monday, 20 August 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

Corrigendum

Page 27, first column, first paragraph

The name of the representative of Oman *should be* Mr. Al-Hinai.

United Nations S/PV.4357 (Resumption 2)

Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

Provisional

4357th meeting

Tuesday, 21 August 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Valdivieso	(Colombia)
Members:	Bangladesh	Mr. Ahsan
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Jamaica	Mr. Ward
	Mali	Mr. Issouf Oumar Maiga
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Norway	Mr. Strømmen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Singapore	Ms. Lee
	Tunisia	Mr. Jerandi
	Ukraine	Mr. Kulyk
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

> Letter dated 15 August 2001 from the Representatives of Mali and Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2001/797)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting was resumed at 3.20 p.m., 21 August 2001.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Indonesia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Widodo (Indonesia): Let me begin, Mr. President, by extending to you my delegation's congratulations on your assumption of the presidency at a time when the Security Council is considering an issue of critical importance to all of us. Let me also commend Ambassador Wang of China for the able manner in which he conducted the work of the Council last month.

This urgent meeting of the Council has, rightly, been called to consider a highly volatile situation — and, indeed, an explosive one — in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, which threatens to engulf the whole Middle East region.

For quite some time now, Indonesia has observed with deepening concern the progressive deterioration of the situation of the occupied territories. The ominous manifestations of this grave situation — the seizure and occupation of Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem, targeted assassinations and incursions into Palestinian lands, closures of Palestinian towns, and deadly military actions resulting in heavy Palestinian civilian casualties, including children — are aggressive and illegitimate practices by Israel, the occupying Power, in total contravention of international law and conventions and resolutions of international legitimacy. They also reflect its intentions to renege on past peace accords, commitments and agreements already concluded with the Palestinians.

On two previous occasions the Security Council failed by a slim margin to adopt a draft resolution by which a United Nations observer force would be dispatched to the occupied Palestinian territories to protect the people from suppression and persecution at the hands of the Israeli authorities. Now, months later with even more scores of Palestinian deaths and wounded, the question that begs to be answered is when will the Security Council assume its responsibility to stop this culture of violence of protracted occupation.

This grave state of affairs is apparent to the entire international community. It is inconceivable that the occupying Power speaks of pursuing the path to peace and calls for an end to the violence, as there can be no doubt that the occupying Power is seriously endangering the peace process by taking measures contrary to it both in letter and spirit.

Such unilateral action is a fatal blow to the peace agreements and undermines all the arduous past efforts undertaken towards attaining comprehensive peace in the region. These illegal measures are creating a new status of conditions on the ground and are thereby transforming the political status of Jerusalem. What makes this action even more reprehensible is that it violates one of the central issues of this conflict.

Given the current dangerous situation and its potential to fall into the abyss of a new and more vicious cycle of violence and bloodshed, the Security Council is duty-bound to take urgent and remedial action. This should include calling upon Israel to immediately end its occupation of Orient House and Palestinian institutions and cease all acts that are detrimental to the safety and well-being of the Palestinian people. Israel should accept the undeniable fact that lasting security can never be achieved while it continues its arbitrary policies and transgressions against the Palestinian people.

It is crucial that wisdom, foresight and leadership prevail. The only path out of this crisis and towards achieving lasting peace is the resumption of peace negotiations based on the full implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), including the land-for-peace principle. Towards this end, it is essential that the process implementing the Mitchell recommendations begin in the presence of international monitors.

In conclusion, this political conflict of more than half a century has exacted too much suffering and taken too many lives. This is a conflict that has as its crux the occupation of a land and the just struggle of the Palestinian people for national independence and self-determination continuing well into this new millennium. Thus, those who seek to reverse what is irreversible are endangering their own security, and peace will remain elusive. Hence, this situation should brook no further delay. The Security Council is strongly urged to take resolute action in order to forestall a worsening situation with incalculable consequences.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Indonesia for his kind words addressed to the presidency.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Turkey. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Cengizer (Turkey): My delegation avails itself of this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council, and wishes you every success. We thank your predecessor in this important work, His Excellency Mr. Wang Yingfan, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, for his able guidance of the affairs of the Security Council.

Turkey subscribed to the European Union declaration yesterday on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. We would like to further underline certain aspects of the situation, which we feel deserve the attention of the parties and the international community, and this is why I am taking the floor now on behalf of Turkey.

To be sure, the increase in tension and the lack of sufficient efforts and resolve to bring about the proper reciprocal steps in order to break the vicious circle of violence — hence the further deterioration of the situation — are causes for worry. Thus, if the parties continue to hold on to their known positions and fail to control these worrisome developments, we fear the whole region is threatened with being dragged into undesirable consequences. Seen in this light, the convening of the Security Council reflects the discontent and anxiety of the international community. Indeed, the current practices and the situation in the occupied territories are alarming in many respects.

It is impossible to justify the acts of terrorism. We firmly believe that acts of terrorism do not serve the rightful cause of the Palestinian people, and we expect the Palestinian administration to take more effective measures against the perpetrators and promoters of such acts and prevent them. On the other hand, it is obvious that measures taken against such acts should be proportionate. Evidently, any encouragement of extremism solely serves the interests of the adversaries of peace while hindering those efforts expected from the Palestinian administration.

The closure of Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem by Israel does not contribute to the efforts directed at easing the tensions. Clearly, such acts will not change the known position of the international community regarding the situation in the occupied territories. We therefore expect that that measure, which has been declared a temporary one, will be lifted forthwith, and that conditions permitting the continuation of the useful function of Orient House in attaining peace and peaceful coexistence will be created.

We cannot afford to lose still more precious time and more human lives before we fully understand that the alternative to peace would have unbearable costs for everyone. At this juncture, such a misjudgement would only increase the historic responsibility of the leaders vis-à-vis their peoples. The only way to attain peace is through the resumption of political negotiations between the parties. The recipe for peace is to be found in the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), in the Madrid and Oslo accords, and in the principle of land for peace.

The proposals contained in the report of the Mitchell Committee, accepted by both parties, lay bare the method by which to return to the path of peace. Those proposals need to be implemented speedily instead of being countered with unrealistic preconditions. It is high time for everyone to understand that procrastination in this regard serves the interests of the extremists and causes the continuation of violence.

Given the present conditions, we think that the deployment of an impartial observer force in the region is needed more than ever before. We hope that the parties will reach agreement on such a deployment, which would benefit both of them. It is with that understanding that we call upon both parties to resume political dialogue.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Turkey for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of India. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sharma (India): It is a pleasure, Sir, to see you presiding over the Council. Let me also thank you for calling this meeting and for giving us the opportunity to speak on this vital issue at a very critical juncture. Since the representative of South Africa has spoken on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, we will confine ourselves to making some supplementary remarks.

We are deeply dismayed and gravely concerned over the spiraling violence in Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, other parts of the Palestinian National Authority area and Israel in recent weeks. The tragic cycle of violence that has engulfed the region has undermined prospects for lasting peace and stability based on a just settlement of differences and has led to a most tragic toll of lives and to regrettable loss of property. It is imperative that this chain of action and reaction be broken before the level of violence escalates beyond control and the prospects for lasting peace recede further. The consequences of unfettered violence could be disastrous, and we support appeals for the abjuration of violence and for a cessation of hostilities.

The escalating situation in the region has had a severe impact on the Middle East peace process and has seriously dented the trust and confidence between the parties — a necessary condition for forward movement in terms of the time-frame envisaged in negotiated agreements on interim and final status issues. Apart from the inherent danger of extremist and intransigent thinking gaining the upper hand and radicalizing public opinion, such a situation vitiates the prospects for a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

We deeply regret the loss of so many lives through wanton acts of terrorism. The closure of Orient House and other Palestinian offices in Jerusalem and Abu Dis and the excessive reaction to the incidents of violence have led to a regrettable exacerbation of the conflagration. This will inexorably lead to a deterioration of the situation through heightened violence and will have an adverse impact on the resumption of dialogue. Moreover, such actions also impair the carefully crafted agreements and understandings that are the basis for the dialogue.

We remain convinced of the need for dialogue and peaceful negotiations in finding a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement of all issues in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace. A worsening situation of violence cannot be a solution to the complex and sensitive issues at stake. It should not be allowed to undermine the peace process for which the leadership of Palestine and Israel have striven so hard. Consequently, it is all the more imperative to eschew violence and exercise utmost restraint in order to create a atmosphere conducive to the resumption of dialogue. We hope that, with the requisite will and determination and with a strong commitment to establishing durable peace, diplomacy and statesmanship will prevail. We trust that the wisdom and sagacity displayed in concluding past agreements will be a guide to a just and successful outcome.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of India for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is His Excellency Mr. Ahmad Hajihosseini, Acting Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations, to whom the Council has extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure.

I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hajihosseini: It is my pleasure at the outset, Mr. President, to extend to you greetings from the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), His Excellency Mr. Abdelouahed Belkeziz, and to express our sincere thanks for the promptness with which you have convened this important meeting at the request of the OIC. I should like also to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency for the month of August. We are confident that under your able leadership the work of the Council will be carried out in a constructive manner.

I am speaking on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. We share the views of many previous speakers, especially our member States, on the grave and deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, as a result of the unwarranted escalation of the Israeli military campaign against the Palestinian people, Israel's illegal seizure of Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in occupied East Jerusalem, and the illegal and inhumane Israeli practices against the Palestinian population, which continue unabated.

Anyone following the ongoing events in Palestine would conclude that the present Israeli Government is indulging in the worst draconian practices ever undertaken by an occupying Power in the present era, an era which we thought would be the epoch of self-determination, human rights and the preservation of human dignity and livelihood, even in occupied territories.

A glance at television newscasts these days will give a clear picture of the tragedies that are befalling the Palestinians in the occupied territories at the hands of the Israeli occupation forces. We are constantly witnessing through the media all those scenes of horror, terror, indiscriminate devastation, persecution and repression of Palestinians at the hands of those forces. We are seeing young children wandering and roaming around amid the rubble of what used to be their homes, now blown up or demolished and removed by Israeli bulldozers. We are watching funeral processions of martyrs, including children and infants, day after day throughout Palestine. We are also witnessing the assassination of civil society leaders by Israeli forces. We are hearing about Israel using the most destructive military warplanes to level to the ground houses and civilian installations in the occupied Palestinian territory, and we are seeing land being confiscated by force and without any legal basis and being turned into construction sites of illegal colonial settlements. Furthermore, we are hearing about the use of "excessive force", to borrow the now familiar expression, against the Palestinian people.

There are countless other such Israeli practices, which I need not elaborate and describe further but which tear apart the Palestinian territories. They include the siege and starvation of the Palestinian people and depriving them of their most fundamental right to dignity, for no other reason than because they seek an end to the Israeli occupation of their land. We know that Israel, the occupying Power, has practically shrunk the Palestinian presence to a small portion of the Palestinian territory — no more than some 20 per cent of it. Israel is attempting to further shrink that portion to forcibly disperse more Palestinians from their lands and ancestral homes in which they have lived for thousands of years, thus joining the waves of Palestinian refugees that have been in exile and in diaspora over the past fifty years.

By doing so, Israel is luring new Jewish immigrants from all over the world to the land usurped from its Palestinian owners, to live in illegal colonial settlements. Israel keeps on building these settlements despite the denunciation of such actions by the international community.

Most of the illegal and inhuman Israeli practices I have just referred to, which can be corroborated by millions of television viewers all over the world, can certainly be regarded under international law as war crimes whose perpetrators should be liable and accountable for these crimes.

As a continuation of the practices I just spoke of, the Israeli authorities recently came out with a very dangerous precedent in the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif when they resorted to the closure of Orient House, the institution and headquarters of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks and of Palestinian institutions that extended social and humanitarian services to the Palestinians in the city of Al-Quds.

It is noteworthy that these Palestinian institutions, recognized by Israel, had been regularly engaged in handling Palestinian affairs in occupied East Jerusalem since 1967. East Jerusalem is considered in the resolutions of this Council as part and parcel of the occupied Palestinian territory, to which all international provisions regulating the affairs of occupied territories should apply. In fact, as several speakers have pointed out, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres actually wrote to his Norwegian counterpart when signing the Oslo Agreement in 1993,

> "The Palestinian institutions of East Jerusalem and the interests and well-being of the Palestinians of East Jerusalem are of great importance and will be preserved."

The Israeli Government' s recent illegal measures show only one thing: that Israel is reneging on the guarantees and commitments it made. Instead, it is snatching away and depriving East Jerusalem of its special status, which served also to protect Palestinian institutions in the city. This unwarranted action is a grave development and a new Israeli provocation of Muslims worldwide, who have a deep-rooted attachment to Al-Quds Al-Sharif and have religious and spiritual ties to it dating back thousands of years.

Based upon what has been stated thus far, the Organization of the Islamic Conference urges the Security Council to take the necessary measures to provide protection to the Palestinian people and to compel Israel to put an end to its bloody military campaign against them, to restore Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem and to lift the restrictions imposed upon entry to Al-Aqsa Mosque and other Muslim and Christian places of worship in the city.

Violence can only beget violence, and the excessive inhuman subjugation and suffering to which the Palestinian people have been subjected since 1967 are driving them to despair. It leaves them with no other option but to undertake a legitimate and just resistance to the Israeli occupation, which is one internationally recognized right of self-defence.

The protection we seek should restrain Israel from continuing its illegal and inhuman practices targeting the Palestinian people and clear the air for the resumption of the peace process, which has been deadlocked for years as a result of the procrastination and delaying tactics of successive Israeli Governments in implementing the resolutions and decisions of international legitimacy based on relevant Security Council resolutions and the land-for-peace principle.

It has become crystal clear to any observer of the question of Palestine and the Middle East as a whole that there will be no peace as long as the occupied territories have not been liberated and as long as Israel continues to reject the spirit and letter of the decisions of international legitimacy, thus preventing the Council and the United Nations from discharging their basic and legitimate role in the settlement of the Middle East conflict.

I thank you again, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting and express the hope that the Council' s deliberations will prevail in relieving the Palestinian people and the populations of the occupied Arab territories of the suffering and injustices being imposed upon them by the Israeli occupation forces. In doing so, the Council will move towards restoring its own prestige and authority, which is needed in maintaining international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Hajihosseini for his kind words addressed to me.

Before calling on the next speaker, I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Mexico in which she requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council' s provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Lajous (Mexico) took the seat reserved for her at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Namibia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on you assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and for arranging this very important meeting. I also wish to commend Ambassador Wang Yingfan of the People's Republic of China for the excellent manner in which he conducted the work of the Council in July.

Yesterday, the Permanent Observer of Palestine briefed the Council about the tragic events in the occupied Palestinian territory and pointed to the fact that the Council continues to ignore the crisis while it is engaged in discussing topics such as the protection of civilians in armed conflict and the prevention of armed conflict. My delegation could not agree more with such a conclusion. It is, indeed, unfortunate that the Security Council has to date been paralysed and has failed to do anything about the tragic situation unfolding in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Council has clearly forsaken its responsibilities, as outlined in Articles 24 and 37 of the Charter of the United Nations, to maintain international peace and security. It has furthermore failed to enforce its own resolutions aimed at resolving the situation in the Middle East.

What started out as an irresponsible provocation — the visit to Al-Haram Al-Sharif last year — has, sadly, already resulted in hundreds of deaths and injuries, and the peace process has suffered perhaps irreparable harm.

Despite this situation, the international community is allowing the carnage to continue in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Israel Defence Force continues to use excessive force against Palestinian civilians, resulting in hundreds of deaths and injuries, untold suffering and widespread destruction. The Israeli Government continues furthermore to practice a policy of extrajudicial killings, which is unacceptable and violates international law. This practice must be stopped and measures must be put in place to ensure accountability for those killings already committed and to deter similar acts in the future. In the light of this, it was even more shocking yesterday to hear some Security Council members preaching a hands-off approach, while some delegations adopted a neutral position in a completely one-sided conflict. This is totally unfair and unacceptable, to say the least.

The economic suffocation of Palestinians continues through the illegal blockade of towns, which not only deprives them of their freedom of movement but also makes it impossible for them to earn their livelihood in a normal manner. These acts constitute gross violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949. The violations should stop and Israel, the occupying Power, should scrupulously abide by its legal obligations and responsibilities under the Convention. In this connection, we support the call for the convening of a conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention in order to enforce the Convention in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. Such an action would help to address the situation on the ground.

Arguments and counter-arguments are being made about violence and resistance by the Palestinians. However, the basic fact remains that Palestine is a nation under foreign occupation — a nation living under dire humanitarian conditions — and the Security Council, which is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, is paralysed and unwilling to do anything about it. No one can therefore expect the Palestinians to sit idly by and wait until they are completely dominated or wiped off the face of the earth. The crux of the matter is that the occupation must stop.

There can be lasting peace in the Middle East only when the just aspirations of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State of their own, are restored. Their rights can never be sacrificed because of the occupying Power's single-minded insistence on security.

The situation in the occupied Palestinian territory continues to degenerate daily, which could lead to a point of no return. The recent occupation by Israel of Orient House and other Palestinian institutions constitutes serious violations by the Israeli Government of earlier agreements between itself and the Palestinian National Authority. This is a cause for serious concern. Unless these actions are reversed, they may have dire consequences that can push the whole region into a cycle of violence, destruction and bloodshed.

It is therefore of the utmost importance for the Security Council to act swiftly and decisively in terms of its responsibility under the United Nations Charter and to establish a United Nations observer force for the protection of Palestinian civilians. As a starting point, the Security Council should preserve its credibility by, at least, adopting the draft resolution currently before it. Although from our point of view the draft is weak, it could, with the necessary political will — I repeat: with the necessary political will — attract consensus from all Council members and provide a road map for the resumption of negotiations.

Furthermore, the parties should show political will and courage to de-escalate the situation and ensure that negotiations are resumed, with the implementation of the Mitchell report as a starting point. In this connection, my delegation welcomes the important role being played by the Secretary-General, and we urge him to continue with these efforts. Outside the United Nations, States with influence over the parties should, instead of inaction, live up to their responsibilities by actively promoting the peace process and moving the parties to the negotiating table.

In conclusion, the basis of negotiations and of a just and lasting peace remains Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The peace process should be put back on track and the implementation of these resolutions should thus be ensured, while the existing agreements between the parties should be honoured.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Namibia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Cyprus. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hadjiargyrou (Cyprus): Allow me at the outset to express to you, Sir, the warm congratulations of my delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. Our congratulations also go to His Excellency Ambassador Wang Yingfan for his able leadership in guiding the work of the Council during the previous month.

Cyprus has aligned itself with the statement delivered by the delegation of Belgium on behalf of the European Union earlier in the debate. I would, however, like to delineate the position of my Government on an issue that we consider of particular importance for our region.

Since the beginning of the recent violent events in the Middle East, the Government and people of the Republic of Cyprus have expressed sorrow and concern over the escalation of violence and the loss of so many lives. The current situation aptly demonstrates the explosive consequences of the long delay in bringing about a solution to the Palestinian problem. All interested parties and the international community at large should consider with the utmost seriousness the tragic reality of everyday conflict, which brings with it the simply unacceptable loss of life and property and violations of human rights that affect the lives of millions of innocent people on a daily basis. Once more we urge both parties to show maximum restraint, since it has been demonstrated time and again that resort to violence not only fails to produce any tangible benefits for either side, but, on the contrary, aggravates an already tense situation.

We strongly condemn any and all forms of terrorism, including the recent suicide bombings in Jerusalem and Haifa that resulted in deaths of many innocent civilians. At the same time, we urge Israel to desist from actions the thrust of which is the collective punishment of the Palestinian population, and to avoid a disproportionate response to violence.

Both Israel's decision to close Orient House and other institutions in Jerusalem and the recent incursions of the Israeli army into the Palestinian territory are particularly disturbing. Such actions provoke the feelings of the Palestinian people and exacerbate the current explosive state of affairs. Action brings reaction and with it further blows to the prospects of peace. We call upon Israel to reverse this decision as soon as possible and abide by its commitments to respect the inviolability of those institutions.

Cyprus condemns, in an unequivocal manner, the extrajudicial executions of Palestinians by Israel. These executions are illegal under international law and unacceptable in the eyes of the international community. At the same time, we urge the Palestinian Authority to exert every effort in order to control outbursts of violence. Only in this way will the destructive cycle of hatred subside.

I take this opportunity to express my Government's particular concern for the suffering of the most vulnerable part of the population — women and children — and its dismay at the tragic loss of these innocent people's lives. We believe that the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949, should be fully respected.

The Republic of Cyprus reiterates its support for a just and lasting settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict based on resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), including the concept of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war, the right of every State in the region to live in security and the principle of land for peace. A lesson drawn from the present escalation of violence is that unless peace efforts and initiatives are based on international law the peace achieved will remain on very shaky foundations.

Solutions to problems must be perceived as fair and accepted as such by the populations concerned, particularly in cases where we have prolonged occupation and denial of the legitimate rights of these populations to live in peace, dignity and security with their neighbours. Otherwise the sense of resentment and opposition will undoubtedly sweep away any agreements that are based on ephemeral considerations.

The Republic of Cyprus strongly supports the non-selective, comprehensive and immediate implementation of the recommendations of the Mitchell report, which we hope will put an immediate end to the violence and create the necessary conditions for the resumption of the peace process. In this respect, we fully subscribe to the position expressed by the European Union and other members of the international community concerning the need for the establishment of a monitoring mechanism to assist in the implementation of the report's recommendations.

The Republic of Cyprus strongly calls upon both sides to refrain from using armed force against each other and to return instead to the negotiating table as soon as possible. The establishment of peace in the region cannot and will not be achieved unless the Palestinian issue, which constitutes the core issue of the Middle East problem, is tackled with courage, determination and the necessary political will by all parties.

Cyprus believes that the forces of moderation on both sides should be strengthened, while at same time the extremists should be isolated. Only in this way will we be able to revive the hope of the vast majority of the peoples of our region for the establishment of a permanent peace and to realize their vision for a new Middle East. For in this cradle of three major religions and civilizations, coexistence cannot but constitute the only acceptable way. History, after all, has given us ample proof of that.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Cyprus for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Lebanon. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Tadmoury (Lebanon) *(spoke in Arabic)*: I would like to thank you, Sir, for giving me the floor, and to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Council for this month. I wish you every success in your work. I would also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency the Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China, for his efforts during the previous month.

For more than 10 months, the Palestinian cause has been going through a critical phase that exceeds our apprehensions. Since the visit of the Israeli Prime Minister last September to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Israeli forces have entered Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem in a provocative manner. Much blood of innocent people has been shed. Houses and civil establishments have been destroyed, and farms have been razed. All these acts of aggression and incursions have completed a dark series of historical humiliations of the Palestinian people that has lasted more than 50 years.

The occupation of Orient House is fraught with serious consequences because it cancels a legal status previously recognized by Israel as part and parcel of the negotiation process. This is also an alarming step backwards in the peace process and is a serious violation of previous commitments. It has also shown that Israeli leaders are throwing out the basis for peace negotiations and international legal documents and relegating them to the past.

The insistence by Israeli leaders that Palestinian rights be eliminated outright is bound to send Israel and the whole region into an infernal spiral of violence. Security cannot be imposed by force, especially when Israel adopts policies of targeted assassinations that are organized in specific lists and commits flagrant violations of international law, particularly international humanitarian law, even though the Council has condemned such violations when it has discussed questions of armed conflict throughout the world.

Not very long ago, we had the impression that prospects for peace were around the corner, and we saw that the players in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were getting closer to discussing sensitive issues, such as the status of Jerusalem and the question of Palestinian refugees. Furthermore, serious negotiations took place with the Syrian side on the security provisions after Israel agreed to a total withdrawal from the Golan, in what was called the Rabin promise or guarantee.

But any observer of the situation can see that every time Israel gets closer to peace with the Arabs, it takes a step backwards and thereby gives rise to suspicion and shows arrogance and condescension over the Palestinians and other Arabs, who are entitled to their rights and would not relinquish them despite Israel's might and its use of it.

The problem today in Israel is not realizing that those who are defending their identity, destiny and independence have passed the barriers of fear and humiliation. Israeli society and Government should try to fathom this new reality. A lasting, just and comprehensive peace in the entire area is in the interests of all those concerned.

I will not go through all the daily suffering that has affected all strata of the Palestinian population, with a minimum of security. This people has begun its legitimate struggle by using the stones from its own territory to affirm its identity and its right to a promising and secure life, like its Israeli neighbours. But the Israeli occupation forces have answered with fighter planes, tanks, cannons, with violence unequalled throughout the world, a world which daily seeks respect for basic human rights.

Today, more than ever, the Council is called upon to restore peoples' rights and to shoulder its responsibilities for maintaining international peace and security. It must return the Orient House and all the other Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem to their owners because this is not simply a question of buildings or headquarters. These are outstanding symbols of a just cause, which should be settled justly and equitably. The time has also come to establish an international monitoring protection mechanism that will put an end to Israeli atrocities and that will establish objective conditions for relaunching the peace process.

It is also worth noting that a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East is an integral whole that requires an immediate end to Israel's violence and the resumption of negotiations by all the parties to the conflict — Palestinians, Syrians, Lebanese and Israelis. These negotiations must always be based on international resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference and the principle of land for peace. They should be based on the agreements concluded in previous negotiations with the Palestinians and the Syrians.

Real peace will not be established unless Palestinians are given their right to self-determination and without ensuring to Palestinian refugees the right to return to their homes, and to work towards the creation of an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital. We must also ensure Israeli withdrawal from the Syrian Golan to the border of 4 June 1967 and the completion of Israel's withdrawal from south Lebanon.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Lebanon for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is Mr. Ali Abbas, Deputy Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, to whom the Council has extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Abbas (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month, as we meet to debate an issue of great importance. Its implications make it incumbent on the Council to deal with it objectively in order to realize not only the aspirations of the Governments and people of the region, but also those of the entire international community.

The suffering of the Palestinian people has been exacerbated as a result of the continuous bloody campaigns of oppression perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces and groups of armed settlers. These campaigns have escalated recently through the use of fighter-bombers and tanks in an unprecedented bombardment of children, civilians and the institutions of the Palestinian National Authority and through broadcasting the names of those who should be eliminated. These acts are clear indications of State terrorism.

All this makes it incumbent on the Council and the international community as a whole to exert pressure on Israel to put an end to these bloody campaigns, to abide by the agreements concluded with the Palestinian side, to withdraw its forces immediately from the occupied Palestinian territories, including Holy Jerusalem, and to resume immediately the negotiation process between the two parties. Otherwise, the cycle of Israeli violence will never end and will indeed threaten the entire region.

Therefore, it is incumbent on the Council to reinstate the credibility of the international community and the Council in dealing with these issues that threaten international peace and security by taking the following steps.

First, the Council should call on Israel, the occupying Power, to abide by the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy, in general, and, more specifically, to abide by the articles of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. It should also make every possible effort to end Israeli practices and quickly provide international protection to the Palestinian people.

Secondly, the Council should hasten the convening of a conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, so as to consider enforcing the Convention in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem. The Council should also emphasize the need to put an end to all settlement activities and to remove all existing ones, in implementation of Security Council resolution

465 (1980). Doing so would serve to de-escalate the situation and help revive the peace process towards a comprehensive, just and lasting peace.

The Council should adopt a resolution that would provide the necessary protection to the Palestinian people by sending international observers.

Thirdly, the Council should reiterate the right of return of all Palestinians, or compensate them in conformity with international resolutions adopted in that regard.

Fourthly, the Council should call on Secretary-General Kofi Annan to take the initiative, as an international impartial mediator, to establish a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East and to return the situation to the state it was in prior to 28 September 2000. That would make it possible to resume the peace process on the basis of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as other relevant resolutions.

The Council is requested to issue a clear and unequivocal condemnation of every attempt made by Israel to weaken the authority of the Palestinian National Authority and that of President Yasser Arafat. We would like to point out the dangerous implications of such a policy, as it is bound to create anarchy. It is incumbent upon the Council to adopt a resolution condemning Israel's recent activities and escalations, namely, its occupation of Orient House, and to call on Israel to return Orient House and all other institutions it has seized to the Palestinian Authority, in conformity with international agreements concluded between the two parties and on the basis of resolutions of international legitimacy. The Council should also take immediate measures to end the state of siege and the policy of starvation that has been imposed on Palestinians by Israel, so that international organizations may deliver aid to the Palestinian people without obstruction from Israel.

From this forum we urge the international community to promptly provide all the necessary economic and humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people so as to help them cope with the impact of Israeli actions on the infrastructure of the Palestinian economy.

We also call on the Council to take the necessary actions to force Israel to take the courageous political decision of returning to the negotiating table and to take advantage of any proposal aiming to restore balance to the serious and deteriorating situation, specifically the Egyptian and Jordanian proposal and the recommendations of the Mitchell Committee.

Allow me to address the United States of America, as it is a major co-sponsor of the peace process, which the Arabs have adopted as a strategic choice. We call on the United States to work towards peace and to strive to keep the situation from deteriorating further.

It is necessary for Israel to know for certain that violence can in no way provide it with the security to which it aspires. That will never be realized as long as Israel continues to pursue its oppressive and expansionist policies of Judaizing Jerusalem. Israel must realize that the only way to bring peace to the Middle East is by putting an end to its occupation and by fully abiding by the principle of land for peace and relevant resolutions of international legitimacy.

To emphasize the so-called unity of the Council is a sort of twisting of reality, as that unity simply means giving Israel the right to veto under American supervision. That serves to render the Council helpless and unable to take measures that would restore the confidence of the Arab world in this body. The Security Council, which is the main authority responsible for bringing a just peace to the Palestinian people, must act to recognize the legitimate needs of the Palestinian people. In conclusion, the League of Arab States wishes to call on the Council not to allow Council unity to come at the expense of the rights of the Palestinian people but act to end this last occupation in the world.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Ali Abbas, the Deputy Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Cuba. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Yesterday, I had the opportunity to greet you, Mr. President, in my capacity as the Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. It is now my pleasure to greet you once again, on behalf of Cuba.

This is the fifth time that the Security Council has held a public debate on the escalation of violence in the occupied Palestinian territories — including East Jerusalem — since the provocative visit by the Israeli Prime Minister to Al-Haram Al-Sharif on 28 September 2000. It is increasingly clear that the causes of the current escalation are to be found in the ongoing occupation by Israel of Palestinian territory and in the non-compliance with the agreements adopted as part of the peace process, including resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). As long as this situation persists, the cycle of violence will inevitably continue.

The recent occupation of Orient House and the incursion of troops and equipment into the town of Jenin, among other examples, are also serious actions that run contrary to the Oslo agreements.

Despite the widespread condemnation of the international community, Israel continues to carry out so-called extrajudicial killings as a matter of policy, in violation of the most fundamental norms of international law.

Cuba considers the heroic struggle of the Palestinian people against Israel's occupation and aggression to be legitimate and unquestionable. We heartily support the intifada. We condemn suicide bomb attacks against innocent Israeli civilians, acts which have clearly been rejected by the Palestinian National Authority. At the same time, we oppose the manipulation of such isolated acts to question the exercise of self-defence by the Palestinian people.

The resolutions that the Security Council has managed to adopt on this issue — the most recent being resolution 1322 (2000), which was adopted on 7 October 2000 — have been flagrantly ignored by Israel, without the Council taking any action. Despite the fact that debates in the Council have made it very clear that it is the wish of the international community that this body assume its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations, the Council has virtually taken no practical steps — although in other situations it acts surprisingly fast.

While innocent civilians, including children, die, are wounded and oppressed on a daily basis and the provisions of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War are violated, the United States has blocked every effort that has been made to send an international force to protect Palestinian civilians.

The most recent example occurred on 27 March, when after countless delaying tactics, the United States vetoed a draft resolution submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement caucus in the Council, which, among other things, called for an immediate cessation of violence and the return to the positions and agreements existing before September 2000 and presented a formula that would eventually make it possible to establish some machinery to protect Palestinian civilians.

But there are many other examples. A total of 23 vetoes have been imposed by the United States on draft resolutions submitted in the Security Council on the question of Palestine since 1973, and everything suggests that the list will continue to grow.

Moreover, tanks, missiles, aircraft and all kinds of weapons are provided by the United States to Israel, means that are then used for action against innocent Palestinian people.

Accordingly, a permanent member has become a de facto accomplice to the escalation of violence and killing in the world's most massive, flagrant and systematic violation of human rights today, which is occurring in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, without that member's suffering any consequences whatsoever.

There is no justification for the continued delay in the establishment by the United Nations of a protection force or other similar impartial machinery that could protect innocent Palestinian people and monitor the situation on the ground. The least that the Security Council could do today in the critical circumstances in the Middle East is to adopt the draft resolution that has been prepared.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Cuba for his kind references to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Mexico. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Ms. Lajous (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, allow me, Mr. President, to congratulate you on the way you have been conducting the work of this historic session.

The Government of Mexico observes with growing concern the re-emergence of violence in the Middle East that today is threatening to spread. We deplore the irreparable loss of human life, most of these people being innocent civilians, and we reiterate our firm belief that violence only begets further violence. The peace process begun in Madrid and Oslo had a promising start, fostering hope within the international community that at last there would be a solution to a conflict that has accompanied the United Nations since its creation. However, the current stagnation is a cause of dismay for peace-loving countries such as Mexico.

For many years we have maintained that over and above the age-old rivalry and over and above the harm that one of the parties may have incurred from the other, it must be understood that belonging to the same region inevitably requires peaceful coexistence and mutual respect as indispensable guidelines for peace.

We have recognized, in particular, the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence.

Accordingly, today, we urge the parties to the conflict to give proof of moderation and to resume immediately the peace negotiations guided by the principles to which they themselves have agreed. We express our support for the recommendations contained in the Mitchell report aimed at putting an end to violence, at restoring confidence between the parties and at resuming the peace negotiations immediately.

Moreover, we join in the appeal for the establishment of monitoring machinery as proposed by the Group of 8, to help the parties in the implementation of the recommendations of that report, and we reiterate our belief that it will be possible to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, but only through dialogue and negotiation.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Mexico for her kind words addressed to me.

The representative of Israel has asked for the floor to make an additional statement.

Mr. Lancry (Israel) (*spoke in French*): When this discussion began, I was given ample opportunity to put forward Israel's point of view. I would like in this regard to express my full gratitude. Nevertheless, this second statement seemed to me to be a necessary clarification at the end of this discussion, which has been clearly unequal in its content.

First of all, we take note of the urgent and relevant appeal for a return to reason and dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis based on a total cessation of violence and confrontation and on the implementation of the Mitchell plan.

A guiding principle of the peace process, the mutual recognition contracted between Israelis and Palestinians following the Oslo Accords remains a major basis for the ability of the two peoples to affirm the principle of their coexistence. The bedrock of the Oslo Accords linked to the intrinsically philosophical dimension of the Israeli-Palestinian relationship — that is to say moving from exclusion and reciprocal denial to mutual recognition — is still valid despite the tragic setback inherent in the current crisis.

It is this common basis, on which the future of both peoples, depends that we must make more visible and credible, through a political process free of any confrontation or terrorist constraint.

In the service of that objective, the Mitchell plan is a necessary and effective tool for a return to the logic of peace. It is this strong and necessary message that most Members of the Security Council have given pride of place.

The Mitchell report, agreed to by the two parties, could be immediately implemented if only the entry point, that is the end of violence and terrorism, were opened up.

This is precisely what is stipulated by the Mitchell report in its broad outlines. Israel has already shown its willingness for a return to the situation that prevailed before 28 September 2000. It is ready for an end to this confrontation on all fronts imposed for almost a year by Palestinians under the cover of an intifada, as soon as Palestinian terrorism gives way to dialogue.

Consequently, rather than exacerbating an already sufficiently complex situation by introducing totally new international machinery, it is up to the Palestinian leadership to assume its responsibility by taking the necessary decision: that of doing away with all strains of terrorism, which are harmful to peace and hinder its painstaking realization.

Good-faith negotiation cannot endure even the smallest dose of terrorism — much less the Palestinian suicide attacks that throughout this conflict have been used as a method of killing the maximal number of people.

It is once again imperative to eliminate terrorism and replace it with policy, a fundamental principle to which Chairman Arafat committed himself when he signed the Oslo Accords. That is an inviolable rule to which Chairman Arafat must bind his dialogue of peace.

Yesterday, permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council indicated their firm and unequivocal condemnation of Palestinian terrorism. They spoke of their revulsion at the atrocious nature of certain Palestinian terrorist practices. Chairman Arafat must heed that powerful message. The condemnation of terrorism that underlay those Council members' appeal for a resumption of dialogue was highly significant. It essentially indicated the need to end the process by which terrorism and policy are becoming interchangeable. This mixture of the two is no longer acceptable; it could even undermine the remarkable political achievements made during the early days of the Oslo process.

Declared by the Mitchell report to be "reprehensible and unacceptable", Palestinian terrorism has now been rejected by nearly the entire Security Council.

Yet we are somewhat perplexed by statements made by certain participants in the debate, which were as inconsistent as they were self-contradictory. An example is the twofold position taken by the Permanent Representative of Pakistan. Our Pakistani colleague both affirmed that he "support[ed] the full implementation of the ... Mitchell report" (*supra, resumption 1*) and bridled at what he called a denial of "legitimacy and glory", referring to Palestinian terrorism. I say this with all the deference I feel towards my Pakistani colleague, whose statements on a variety of issues I invariably appreciate, but how can we seriously believe in the "legitimacy and glory" of suicidal terrorism and its gruesome effects?

In another vein, worthy of weightier discourse, I would like to respond to one of the comments of my Pakistani colleague. He said that "peace cannot be established through subjugation". I willingly agree with that, and recall in that context that peace was not obtained at Camp David precisely because of the flaw of subjugation: as a response to the comprehensive Israeli peace offer encompassing the main final-status issues, Israel found itself facing the threat of scheduled extinction by demographic drowning linked with the right of return of Palestinian refugees. We could not submit to subjugation of that kind.

This type of Security Council debate inevitably generates its share of tangential and outrageous rhetoric fueled by ranting. And the Permanent Representative of Iraq felt neither embarrassment nor restraint in engaging in unmatchable hyperbole: he accused Israel of nothing less than using nuclear and chemical weapons against the Palestinian people.

Soon after his Iraqi colleague, the Permanent Representative of Libya, in what appears to be a recurring rhetorical spasm, drew on his repertory of hatred and contempt for the Jewish people and for Israel.

Those two permanent representatives, of Iraq and of Libya, also represent the serene permanence of two eccentric dictatorships that, with noteworthy composure, advocate the eradication of the State of Israel. The most recent reminder of this anti-Israel penchant may be seen on page A-8 of today's *The New York Times*, which quotes the regime's number-two man, the Iraqi Vice-President, Izzat Ibrahim, as calling on the Arab and Islamic nation to combat Israel and "to expel the sons of monkeys and pigs, strangers on the land".

We Israelis have no particular reason to welcome such lessons of contempt and hatred, as taught in countries such as Iraq and Libya, but I wonder whether such rhetoric is the best way of serving the Palestinian cause.

As we have said, we consider the draft resolution being circulated at Palestinian behest to be utterly impracticable, despite its sophisticated crafting. The text is unilateral; it absolves the Palestinian side of any responsibility for its terrorist practices; and it strips the Mitchell plan of its bilateral dimension and uselessly burdens it with a totally superfluous international machinery.

We stress that our approach, which calls for direct bilateral negotiations on the implementation of the Mitchell report, enjoys significant support among key members of the Security Council. It is from that perspective — which encompasses the same means used during the most fruitful stages of the Israeli-

Palestinian peace process — that we invite our Palestinian partners to resume the dialogue.

Recent months, during which similar debates have taken place in the Security Council, have duly shown the futility of an exercise that would impose an unjustified and ineffective international presence. Only a return to the beginnings and the life-source of the historic turning taken by Palestinians and Israelis since Oslo will enable us to overcome our frustrations and attain the peace and coexistence that both our peoples deserve.

The announced meeting between Shimon Peres, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel, and Chairman Yasser Arafat could indicate — at least, this is our conviction and our hope — such a new beginning.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Permanent Observer of Palestine has asked to make a statement, and I give him the floor.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): As usual, the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations has taken the lead in making statements that are so negative and self-contradictory that there is no option but to respond. In our opinion, the statement by the Permanent Representative of Israel yesterday was worse than what we are used to. It was so full of contradictions and, I would perhaps also say, lies — claiming that Israel's actions are in conformity with international law and that Orient House was used for terrorist purposes, et cetera — that we thought we would not respond to it. It was, in brief, a statement that was not worthy of response.

Despite that and despite the statement made yesterday, something related to the integrity of the Secretariat of the United Nations caught my attention. Yesterday, the Permanent Representative of Israel talked about a report by the fact-finding mission on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and criticized it. I simply ask: is there a report unknown to everyone save the Permanent Representative of Israel, or is there a report that was distributed to some Member States and not to others? Probably the ladies and gentlemen in the Secretariat of the United Nations could enlighten us in this regard. What is the real status of the report to which the Permanent Representative of Israel made reference? And how could he have read that report if it was not a general document available to all Member States of the United Nations?

Going back to the statements of the Permanent Representative of Israel, I will say that in his statement today, though his French language is far better than his English, the meanings are essentially not different from those of yesterday's statement. It seems that the Permanent Representative of Israel did not understand the interventions of more than 50 speakers, including the 15 members of the Security Council.

I may be wrong, but it seems to me that the overwhelming majority of the members of the Security Council, if not all of them, did support the idea that the Security Council must do something specific and tangible. The majority, if not all, supported the full implementation of the recommendations of the Mitchell report without any conditions. The overwhelming majority support the establishment of a monitoring mechanism to help in the implementation of those recommendations. Regarding the situation on the ground, the majority was against the bombings that took place in Israel. This again is our position, as well. There was a majority against the oppressive measures taken by Israel against the Palestinian people, a majority against collective punishment and the closure of areas, against Israeli occupation of Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem, and a majority against extra-judiciary killings and all such measures. Most importantly, an overwhelming majority was against the Israeli occupation.

Despite all this, the Permanent Representative of Israel tells us today that the Mitchell recommendations could be implemented if the violence stops. Again, the same logic is used to assume that calm could lead to the implementation of the recommendations, and not the fact that implementing the recommendations will help de-escalate the situation. This is the logic of someone who does not accept this report and who is not at all keen on implementing those recommendations.

It must be said that with the same arrogance and disdain in addressing others, whatever their viewpoints may be, the Permanent Representative of Israel has referred to *The New York Times* today. Of course, *The New York Times* cannot be accused of supporting Palestinian positions. I do not know how he felt when he read the editorial in *The New York Times* and the front-page article on the Israeli checkpoints and how these checkpoints make the life of the entire Palestinian populations hellish.

Is it not time for some moderation on the part of the Israelis? Is it not time for some honesty, introspection, some sort of respect for the international community, and some change from the previous positions, which will only lead us all to catastrophe?

The Israeli position extends even to the draft resolution, which was tabled informally — it has not yet been formally tabled for the members of the Security Council. Illogical and irrational criticism was directed at its language. This informal draft contains language agreed to by the entire membership of the Security Council last March. In fact, some deletions were made in the language agreed upon. Some issues opposed by one member of the Security Council were deleted, of course. The purpose was to attempt to have that member change its position. The draft resolution is not a Palestinian position, nor is it an Arab position. It is, however, a Palestinian attempt to remind the members of the Security Council what they agreed upon last March. What is the problem here with calling for the implementation of the recommendations of the Mitchell report or calling for an observer mechanism and the resumption of the peace process? What is the problem with this, except for some strange notions that the resolution uses language that takes the side of the Palestinians? What is the meaning of all this?

Quite frankly, we hope that the Council will take all this into consideration, that it will take into consideration the language submitted to it in the draft resolution and the positions of the Members of the United Nations. We also hope it will take into account the deep sense of frustration among many of the Members due to the lack of action by the Council on this situation and its lack of commitment and non-fulfilment of its responsibilities as contained in the Charter of the United Nations. We hope that this will be the end result.

Finally, I should like to comment on the possible meeting between Arafat and Peres. The Palestinian side has never opposed such a meeting — it has never opposed serious dialogue. The problem has been on the Israeli side. Were such a meeting to occur — neither the time nor the place for such a meeting has been determined — it would be subject to certain conditions dictated by the Prime Minister of Israel: no serious political questions could be discussed, but only issues related to the current security situation on the ground.

Frankly speaking, we do not believe that a meeting held in such circumstances would change anything, even though we will try. We have tried before and we will continue to try. However, if we are to be successful there must be a real change in the Israeli position — a change that will lead to different results, a change based on a political vision, not on manoeuvres aimed at hoodwinking the international community and at further eroding the Palestinian position.

We have not yet lost hope. However, if our hopes are to be fulfilled, we need the help of the Council. We appeal to the members of the Council, as representatives of the international community, to act in accordance with their duties and responsibilities under the Charter.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.

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Security Council

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Official communiqué of the 4358th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private in the Security Council Chamber at Headquarters on Thursday, 23 August 2001, at 10.30 a.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

> "At its 4358th meeting, held in private on 23 August 2001, the Security Council considered the item entitled 'The situation in East Timor'.
>
> "The President, with the consent of the Council, invited the representatives of Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Namibia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, the Republic of Korea and Sweden at their request, to participate in the discussion of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.
>
> "The Security Council heard a briefing under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure by Mr. Hédi Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. Giving the details of the election arrangements, Mr. Annabi informed the Council that the electoral campaign in East Timor so far had been conducted in a peaceful manner. He said that political parties and the population at large had shown strong support for the pact of national unity.
>
> "The members of the Council, as well as the representative of Belgium emphasized the importance of the peaceful conduct of the August 30 elections. They believed that a peaceful, democratic process would be a major first step towards East Timor's independence in a complex process of stabilization in East Timor. Speakers encouraged a spirit of peace, democracy and tolerance throughout the electoral process and beyond, and joined the Secretary-General in supporting the heroic efforts of the East Timorese people and in urging a large voter turn-out.
>
> "Mr. Annabi responded to the comments and questions."
